

MLLE.
L'INCONNUE

THE AUTOMATIC VOCALIST



By ROBERT C. GIVINS



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“MLLE. L’INCONNUE”

THE AUTOMATIC VOCALIST

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“THE RICH MAN’S FOOL.”

“THE MILLIONAIRE TRAMP.”

“THE UNWRITTEN WILL.”

“LETTERS OF TRIP ’ROUND THE WORLD,” ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

ON the Rue du Faubourg, Paris, in the fourth story of a seedy old building two boys lived alone. They struggled hard to subsist upon the meager wages earned by Jacques, the elder boy, who was employed in a toy manufactory where their uncle, Pierre Luvois, had



worked for years. They were cousins. Fate had deprived them of their natural guardians. Jacques and Edouard were therefore proofs of that ancient sentiment, "The

good are better made by ill, as flowers, crushed, are sweeter still."

"How many herring remain in the box?" inquired Jacques, who had just returned from the factory.

Plenty for our supper; and I have some nice hot rolls and a little honey, too," replied Edouard, the younger, whose bright, cheerful face always bore the impress of hope.

There is one trait in human character whose beauty no one questions, and that is true friendship. Jacques and Edouard, opposite in temperament, were still the firmest of friends.

“Good! dear Edouard. You know how I like real honey. Where on earth did you get it?”

“Oh,” replied Edouard, laughing, “I earned a few sous carrying water up for Madame Bogaire, and a farmer’s wife, with a wagon, requested me to hold her horse while she peddled honey about. For this she gave me a pound at half price. Think of it, Jacques!—real honey, made by live bees!”

After supper, by the light of a small oil lamp, they read aloud, as was their custom, respecting the late wonderful inventions in electricity. “Jacques,” said Edouard, interrupting, “why cannot we invent something? Why not study up the uses and applications of this new marvel and make our fortune?”

“Poor boy,” replied Jacques, “always hopeful.” Jacques’ nineteen years were full of adversities and bitter disappointments.

“Yes, Jacques, why can’t we invent something that will bring us fame and fortune?”

Jacques, who of late had become an earnest student, with grave face, and not inclined to sensationalism like his younger cousin, said, “It takes time, study and thought, Edouard, to invent. Copying is one thing; original invention is another.”

"I have it," replied Edouard. "Let us make an electric woman—one that can walk, talk and sing on the stage."

Jacques smiled grimly. "I am afraid, my boy, it would be a fright. It might prove another Frankenstein, like the terror we read about the other night. Anyway," continued Jacques, "it will be amusing, and it might frighten Uncle Pierre when he comes up the dark stairs some night."

"What a joke," continued Edouard. "Madame Bogaire might raise our rent, thinking we had a boarder."

"Never mind, however," urged Jacques, "the construction work will furnish us with many points about the art of moving things with electrical power, and for that reason, principally, I am in favor of your scheme. It will cost us many nights of hard work, boy, and hundreds of francs, to get this queer creature in shape before it will frighten even the black cat, let alone Uncle Pierre. But I am with you. Let us try it."

"Why, I believe," said Edouard, proudly, "that we can make an automatic woman so perfect that she will deceive an audience. We will have her walk out in the middle of the stage, and the audience never can guess whether she is alive or not."

"Yes, yes," said Jacques, laughing, "and sing the Marseillaise, I suppose."

"Why not," replied Edouard.

"Bah, how would you make her sing? Don't you think you are now going too far?"

Edouard, raising his hands enthusiastically, replied: "Why, don't you know? Put a phonograph inside of her."

"But I am afraid," said Jacques, "that she might lose her balance, topple over head first, and disperse the audience in a panic."

"Uncle Pierre said last night," replied Edouard, "he could make a figure of an animal that could walk in any direction by electrical power. Why, Jacques, you conservative old fellow, we might get our electrical lady a position in a *café chantant*, and she might earn enough to pay her board if Madame Bogaire demands it." "Yes," continued Edouard, "and our board, too, and thousands of francs besides. Let us ask Uncle Pierre what he thinks of it," said Edouard, placing his hands affectionately on his cousin's shoulder.

"No, no," said Jacques, "Uncle is very jealous. He will believe we are too young to attempt such a feat. He might not assist us. In fact, he might strongly oppose the whole thing." Jacques thought a few seconds, and then replied, "We will work on your dear lady alone, and we must keep her a dead secret to the world for the present."

"Agreed, agreed," they said again, and shook hands.

"What shall we call her?" said Edouard, his cheeks flushing at the idea.

"You name the queer creature—she is your original idea."

That night Edouard thought over a dozen names, and finally decided "MLLE. L'INCONNUÉ," (The Unknown), would be appropriate.

There was a small work-shop in the attic of their building, formerly occupied by an old man who worked in wax and made figures for hats in the millinery stores. He had gone back to England recently, and this room was for rent at two francs per week. The electrical establishment where Uncle Pierre worked had added the manufacturing of a certain electrical appliance, and Edouard, at the request of Uncle Pierre, had also secured a situation. With the small earnings of both they were able to save considerable, and thus carry on their project. Duplicate keys of the attic were safely kept, and no one was permitted to enter except the cousins. Madame Bogaire, the proprietress of the old building, who occupied a room on the ground floor, being a cripple, seldom climbed to the fifth story, and to reach the attic required the ascent of one more flight. As the iron railing of the tumbledown old balcony in front of the attic window had long since dropped to the sidewalk, there was little danger of inquisitive persons trying to peer into the window.

"Safe," said Edouard, as he spied about, and examined the lock, which was of modern design.

"Do you know, my boy," said Jacques, one day, "that we are in for an exceedingly laborious work. It will require numerous experiments and no end of study before we can produce anything but a

large comic doll as hideous as the worst looking manikin in the toy factory. And, if we fail, we will become the laughing stock of the establishment."

"I have thought of that," replied Edouard. "But even should we fail, we will have conquered many small things which to us now seem impossible."

"It is for that reason," said the grave Jacques, "that I go into it with such heart. We may learn much by the attempt. We must first construct a frame of strong wire, about the size we want 'IT' to be. Pardon me, Edouard, Mlle L'Inconnue, I mean."

"As tall as Marie who brings the milk," said Edouard, smiling.

"Ah, you are observing. I never noticed Marie's height. In fact, I don't believe I would know her if I should meet her. She leaves the milk at the door at 5:30 a. m., and is gone like a fairy. Have you talked with her?"

"Yes," replied Edouard, blushing slightly; "that Sunday you went up the Seine with Uncle Pierre, she was late and apologized to me. I was playing the old guitar, and humming a tune. 'What a nice accompaniment you play,' she said, as she put her head in the door, only for five seconds—and then she was gone. As she tripped down stairs, she sang a few lines. Ah, what a voice!" said Edouard, raising his arms high in the air. "It was like some wonderful singing-bird or sweet-toned instrument. I was astonished."

“Have you not seen her since?”

“No, she comes to the door when we are slumbering away, and I leave the money under the mat for her; and no one, probably, but Madame Bogaire knows where she lives.”

“The reason I inquired, Edouard, is this: You spoke about our—our woman—singing on the stage. To do this we must secure the voice of an angel, for ordinary good singers are now quite common. A wax woman will be a rank failure unless she possesses, at least, a superb voice. Then, how tall do you think this Marie is?”

“She was tall for a girl—five feet, six, I should say. Remember, I only saw her face a moment, the time she leaned forward to peep in the door.”

“Well,” said Jacques, interested, “that old Giotto, the Italian, who sells plaster of paris casts at the boat landing on the Seine, could construct a form for us. He has many models of Venuses and nymphs—and I think he is a sculptor, because he sold a marble statuette, most exquisitely executed, if I know anything about it, to some tourists that Sunday we went up the river.”

“How glad I am, Jacques, that you have thought of this. It will be so necessary to have a perfect form. Why, Madame Bogaire said that the old wax-worker who occupied the attic room could construct a female face so lifelike that she was always startled when he carried his figures downstairs.”

"Oh, I don't believe, Edouard, in going into this thing in a haphazard way. If necessary, we will work for years before we launch our coming lady before the footlights. For the present we must content ourselves to secure the services of Giotto and construct our frame. All the electrical work, phonographs, the imitation of the human voice, and the devices for the movement of the muscles and the bogus breathing will become a matter for future study."

"Will she be a blonde or brunette?" asked Edouard anxiously.

"Has Marie light or dark hair?"

"Light."

"The reason I asked," said Jacques, "is, we must have some sort of model, and in some respects perhaps Marie might do."

"Marie has a sweet face," replied Edouard. "That is, all I could see of it was sweet—pretty teeth, and oh, that smile!"

"She smiled sweetly?" remarked Jacques. "It is wonderful that you remember that one glance of Marie so exceedingly well. I suppose," continued Jacques, "it would frighten the milk-girl into a fit if we should propose that she should become our model."

"It will take time to do this," said Edouard, who was deciding in his mind how he could become better acquainted with Marie. "I play, and she sings," he remarked to himself.

CHAPTER II.

OLD GIOTTO was a friendly old man. He had some trouble with the Italian government in Florence, and several years ago had removed to Paris. He was a sculptor of ability, and was thoroughly versed in the art of constructing the human form by scientific

measurement. It was the intention of the boys to first construct a strong wire frame for their figure, and then complete the interior with various electrical appliances. To enable



them to complete the frame, Giotto's services were summoned. The wire frame was to be constructed in his shop. The old man was delighted to find two youths with such ambition. He would aid them to the best of his ability. But why did they only desire the frame alone?

"We are studying the making of figures in wax," said Jacques, "and, as it is our first lesson, we prefer to invent as we go along."

"You should have a plaster mould to work on, I think," said Giotto. "But really, I know nothing of working in wax. The frame is easily made," continued Giotto, "I can bend the wire and create the

form, but a tinsmith or a plumber must help me make the joints."

"Oh, we can do that," said Edouard, "because we learned that at the works."

In a few days Giotto had the wire model complete. "It is the form of a Venus," he said, "but stands a little too straight."

"It will do well," said Jacques, taking the wire form in his arms, while Edouard thanked Giotto for his most reasonable bill.

A strong iron bar ran down the spine, from the neck to the legs, upon which could be hung heavy electrical appliances and batteries. It took many difficult nights before the boys succeeded in getting swinging hinges for the arms and legs, so they would move easily and stand steadily when placed in a certain position. Jacques frequently paused in his efforts, but Edouard worked steadily and persistently on, and the big lamp in the attic room was seldom turned out before midnight. As their day's work at the factory, however, was of a light nature, they were seldom fatigued. A set of batteries worked the arms, another the legs, and a powerful electric current, from a battery in the center of the body, furnished power to move the various false muscles of this wonderfully constructed form. After three months' experimenting, the frame would walk a few steps and raise her arms at the touch of a button in her back. The workers were encouraged.

CHAPTER III.

THE aged wax figure worker returned. He had gone home to visit his sister in London. He had secured another room in the attic of the adjoining building and resumed his works of art. Edouard called on him, and arranged to have him make a bust and head of

wax, arms also, and lower portions of a pair of legs.



“To make the form a success,” said the old man, thoughtfully, “I should have a model.”

“What shall we do?” said Jacques. “A real woman model will cost more than our combined salaries. There is such a demand for them in the art classes by the visiting Americans and other students of art and sculpturing.”

“MARIE!” suggested Edouard.

“Impossible,” replied Jacques. “Marie would drop her milk and collapse at the very suggestion of such a thing.”

“I don’t know,” said Edouard. “I met her again last Sunday. I intended to tell you all about it. Madame Bogaire gave me her address. She lives with her aunt, a mile down the Cours de Vincennes.

They are very poor, but not as poor as we are. They have three cows and a dozen chickens. When I passed the door of the small cottage she was on the porch, dressed in white, wearing a bright blue sash, and she had blue ribbons in her hair. And as she did not see me, she was singing; or else she was singing because she did see me—I don't know which. I introduced myself as one of her customers. Her old aunt approved. She had a kindly face, and, as she was about to hand Marie a cup of tea and a small cake, she invited me also to accept—which I did. 'I have only caught one glance of you,' I said, 'since you have been bringing the milk.' 'Yes,' she replied, 'the day I was late.' 'Now, Marie—I think that is your name—the reason I called was this: That morning, you remember, as you passed down the stairs, you sang a line of some song. It has been ringing in my ears ever since.' Marie laughed and showed her splendid teeth. 'You are joking,' she replied; 'why, I cannot sing.' 'You may not be able to sing,' I replied, 'but you have the sweetest voice I ever remember hearing. And a song by a sweet voice suits me better than an opera.' Marie laughed and hid her face in her handkerchief. 'Really,' she said, 'it was rude of me to put my head in your door that morning. But I thought you would be angry about the delay in getting the milk.' 'Cousin Jacques and I live alone, like a couple of old bears, and never see any one. Marie, I would like to hear you sing again. I can play the guitar,

and accompany you in any key if you hum the air over once. 'Marie thought a minute. 'I heard you play,' was all she said. 'Jacques is queer,' I told her, about some things, and does not like singing. But I know he would like to hear you ever so much.'"

Jacques nodded his head.

This peculiar human mind of ours is so singularly constructed that what we do for selfish purposes is frequently construed to mean genuine affection. Poor Marie believed at once she had a beau, and ambitious Edouard, contrary to her expectation, was merely coniving to secure a voice for "Mlle. L'Inconnue."

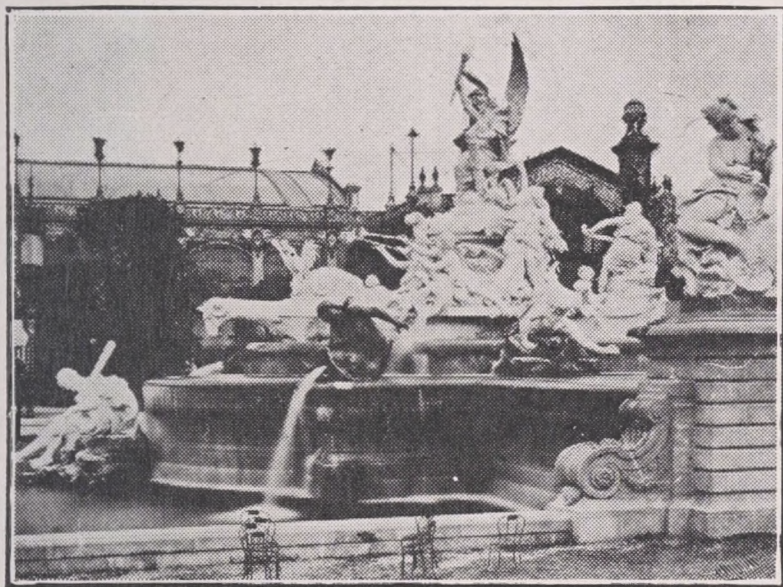
Edouard was to bring his guitar and music the following Sunday and play for Marie to sing, while Jacques was to look up a new quality of wax for the wax figure maker, a kind that would adhere firmly to the plaster cast. Jacques sighed frequently as he thought over the numerous difficulties in the way of their success. "One is," he said, "to get a cast of Marie's face, if she is as beautiful as Edouard describes her. Another is to have the flesh tint so lifelike that it will deceive the most scrutinizing glances of a promiscuous audience. And, last, to have the mechanism of the phonographic department of the coming wonder so perfect that there can be no break or mishap during the singing. Ah, I will go down to the window of the millinery stores of the Louvre, where old Dobson's wax figures are displayed."

Jacques looked in the window at the figures upon whose head were the latest designs of millinery—little hats and big hats, and immense spring hats with an entire flower garden on them. “Wonderful, wonderful, old man,” he said. “I remember,” said Jacques, soliloquizing to himself, “that he said he had worked, when a younger man, in Madame Tussaud’s great wax figure gallery of London, and had studied the art for over a quarter of a century. These faces would deceive any one at a slight distance.”

“Ah,” sighed Jacques, “but how shall we procure the model? I have it!—We will get old Dobson to secure the services of Marie, or some other girl, and she will never suspect.”

CHAPTER IV.

EDOUARD was progressing finely. He played in the key of G or C, or any other key adapted to Marie's voice, and she sang like a young canary, only sweeter. She did understand music, Edouard discovered. She had studied at the public school, and had taken



several lessons in English from a lady, a local instructor residing one block from their cottage.

As the work on "Mademoiselle" progressed, a series of electric buttons were strewn along her spine and she contained numerous watts, clocks and unique appliances in her interior. She could curtsy and smile by touching buttons No. 3 and 7; she could walk straight forward and back off the stage. Nevertheless, she was decidedly awkward up to date. Old Dobson decided, after several attempts, that a photograph of Marie was all he could secure. She declined absolutely to pose for a wax figure in any shape or manner. Edouard was disconcerted, but not disheartened.

"I can easily get her to give me her photograph, and if old Dobson can see the exact shape of her

head and neck, he can make the figure,—at least he says so, and you know, Jacques, he has a marvelous eye. He copies the faces of the girls in the stores so perfectly one can identify them at a glance.”

As the cousins worked diligently in the daytime, their proficiency became so apparent that the toy factory firm almost doubled their wages. Their Uncle Pierre also had succeeded in inventing a marvelous electrical toy, which brought fame to the house, and he was given a slight percentage on the sale of this and other toys of his invention.

It was a year since Edouard suggested his marvelous proposition, and “Mlle. L’Inconnue” was almost complete. She could walk on the stage, that is, the improvised stage erected for her by Jacques and Edouard. She could salute, bow, curtsy. smile sweetly — exhibiting her teeth, wave her handkerchief, move her eyes—even flirt with her eyes. Heretofore she merely wore a costume of cheap muslin and mosquito netting. Now a beautiful stage dress was being made by Picard for her, and another was designed in case she proved a success. The exact measurements were given by Edouard, who had to make out a story at the tailoring establishment to the effect that the dress was to be sent to America. Jacques looked after the wax part, and the interior works and appliances—as he had by this time become a proficient electrician, while Edouard’s duty was to insert the various appliances in the proper places in the head, neck and body of the figure.

Marie had not the slightest objection to singing her best and most popular songs in the records of the peculiarly constructed phonograph. But when it came to saying, "Good night, my dear Edouard." she hesitated.

"Why do you wish me to say that?" she asked, with crimson in her cheeks.

"Oh, Marie," he replied, "sometimes I am so lonely, it will cheer me a little." Then he held her hand, and she said sweetly, "Good night, good night, my dear Edouard."

The little recording instrument held records of all Marie's pretty songs, and, with great skill, was installed in the upper portions of Mlle. L'Inconue's wax breast. Marie's hair, face, neck, bust, size, height and figure had been copied, and Giotto's plaster cast completely and scientifically covered by Mr. Dobson's tinted wax. A beautiful head of light golden, but not red, hair appeared under the latest spring style of hat, together with a marvelous dream of a dress with a long train.

"That train, I am afraid," said Jacques, "will be a great nuisance. How can you get at the buttons on her back?"

"Why, I have arranged all that," replied Edouard. "We will set the button for advancing at No. 1; No. 3 will be curtsy; No. 7, a smile; No. 8 will be to raise the music in position, and No. 9 sing; then the back-off will be No. 10. I will allow her time to sing, because, if she does stand still half

a minute it will probably be about the length of the applause, and there will be no awkward pause."

"You are a grand success, my L'Inconnue," Edouard remarked, as he took a last look and was about to close the door of the attic room one night. He paused a second. "Ah, you look so beautiful," he said, "I love you. How I wish you could speak to me," Edouard exclaimed enthusiastically.

It was ten by the clock in the interior of Mlle. L'Inconnue—the exact time she was to say, "Good night, good night, my dear Edouard."

Edouard gasped for breath. "Great Heavens! What does this mean?" he said excitedly. Then he remembered he had that day installed in the figure the words which Marie had recorded in the phonograph, and he laughed outright.

Jacques, who met Edouard at their room shortly after this occurrence, remarked, "Edouard, you appear happy. Are we on the eve of success?"

"I should say we are. Why, I have just been frightened half to death by my own folly. I inserted Marie's words in the lower phonograph to-day, and forgot to turn off the starting lever. These words were set for ten o'clock on the minute, and that was the time that I was about to shut the door and lock the figure in—and the thing spoke to me! At first I thought it was a ghost!"

CHAPTER V.

EDOUARD and Jacques, having completed their wonderful work, sauntered out one evening down the Bois de Boulogne, intending to find a theatre comique or cafe chantant which might seem favorable for the introduction of the new songstress. They spoke to



several managers of the smaller cafes about their invention. But all shook their heads, saying, "we have too many singers now. If you can bring one here who can dance,

we might figure with you." At the doors of several of the larger cafes chantants a small notice announced, "No singers wanted."

Rather disheartened they returned to their apartment and discussed the situation. Edouard decided that it would be better for them first to exhibit their mechanical figure to some manager, and explain to him the entire scheme, before attempting to make a contract.

After many rebuffs and sneers from the various pompous, fussy little managers along the boulevards, they found one who listened to their story, and, like Columbus, they at last secured a hearing. He was

the manager of the Varieties. He listened to their story, but shook his head doubtfully. They were about to leave his office, when the manager, who had a kindly face, remarked:

"I like enterprise; especially in boys. I will see what you have. To-morrow, Sunday, at 10 a. m., I will call upon you. Be there, as my time is valuable." Taking their names and addresses, he folded the card in his pocket and bade the young inventors good night.

"You see I was right," said Edouard, as they left the office. "Those cheap proprietors of the smaller cafes could not understand what we were trying to explain, and merely shook their heads to get rid of us. This manager runs the biggest vaudeville show in the city, and you can see he has some sense."

CHAPTER VI.

THE manager of the Varieties was on time, and walked up the four flights, puffing, and remarking to himself, "Phew, I am becoming so heavy, it is a great effort for me to climb stairs."

The boys were so excited at the arrival of a real



manager in their humble apartment they could scarcely find words to express themselves. One more flight, and a few more puffs from the fat manager, and he stood

face to face with the coming sensation of Paris, Mlle. L'Inconnue.

He raised his hat, as all polite managers do in the presence of a lady—but said nothing for a long minute. He gazed steadfastly at the marvelous imitation of a human being. Then—

"Mon Dieu! It is grand! It is superb! I am delighted!"

Putting his hand, in a friendly manner, on Edouard's shoulder, he said, "Now, show me what she can do."

Jacques manipulated the buttons. The figure walked forward a step or two, and curtsied.

Another button was touched, and the figure gracefully raised her right hand in which she held a sheet of music; the left hand followed, and caught the music also. And then Mlle. L'Inconnue sang sweetly a popular song of the day. The manager turned pale, laid his hat upon a bench, and said—

“Grand, grand! I don't know what I can say.”

Then Jacques touched the retiring button, and the figure bowed gracefully and retired to the corner of the stage.

“It is a magnificent success,” shouted the manager, excitedly. “I will not pretend that it is not a success to enable me to secure a good contract. Name your price. It is a splendid scheme, and will fill the house for weeks.”

“We have labored on this for over a year,” said Jacques. “Make us a proposition, with a scale; so that if the ‘Mlle.’ proves a great success, we can receive benefits accordingly.”

The manager sat down on a broken chair, and taking out his memorandum book, added up the expenses of various coming attractions at his theatre. Then he replied, quietly, “I will do this for you. I will give you 2,000 francs for the first week, whether we are successful or not. And if the figure proves the success I think she will I may double or treble that sum. But, if I introduce her, and make a great success the first week, you must agree to deal only with me in the future for at least a year.”

Jacques, who had an eye for business, was very cautious. He hesitated for a few minutes, while Edouard looked on as if expecting him to answer and agree to the proposition.

"Suppose this proves a great success," Jacques said to the manager, "and your theatre is crowded right along for weeks?"

"Then," said the manager, "if that comes true, I will deal most liberally with you, and you can depend upon it. Put this in a memorandum, and I will sign it."

The temporary contract being agreed upon, a night was set for Mlle. L'Inconnue to appear at the Varieties and sing the latest, sweetest, and most popular songs of the day.

CHAPTER VII.

SHALL we invite Marie and her aunt the first night?" Edouard inquired of Jacques.

"Why not?" answered Jacques. "We may as well, first as last, make her aware of the deception."



"What I am afraid of," said Edouard, thoughtfully, "is that, when she hears her songs, she will become annoyed at the many stories I have told her to get her

to sing in the Edison records, and may throw the whole thing up and declare that we are humbugs, and have nothing more to do with us. She is very high-minded, and there is no telling how much she may hate deception. I have already received a little intimation to that effect."

Jacques replied coldly, "Oh, we have now passed the doubting limit—and perhaps a little money may cajole Marie into continuing her singing."

"Don't you believe it for one minute," said Edouard, his eyes flashing. "Marie wouldn't do

anything she didn't want to for all the money in Paris."

"Lord, she's high-toned for a milk-maid," responded Jacques, with a sneer.

"She won't be a milk-maid long," said Edouard, patting his serious cousin on the shoulder, "because she is going to get some of the francs; and she is entitled to them."

Jacques then turned to Edouard, saying, "Never mind, boy. Did you see how delighted and enraptured M. Jolie of the Varieties was when he heard the first song? And he, you know, must have tested thousands of voices in his day. I will concede, we can never get another Marie. That voice, the manager said, was free from mannerisms and affectation, and when he slapped his hands and said, 'Bravo, bravo, bravissimo!' I then knew he meant it. Don't you see, Edouard, how he could have deceived us. He could have made us believe that the whole thing would not go at all, and that we might become failures and a laughing stock, and then held us down to a contract that would have been all one-sided. No doubt, he is a shrewd man. But the 'Mademoiselle' threw him completely off his guard. Now, Edouard," said Jacques, in a whisper, "you are gaining in worldly knowledge every day. Keep in with Marie; we will demand a box for Marie and her aunt the first night."

The buttons running down Mademoiselle's back would not do. "You see," exclaimed M. Jolie to Jacques, at the first rehearsal, "I intend, at least

for the first few weeks, to deceive the audience, and permit them to believe, as they will, that it is a woman fixed up to resemble an automatic figure. After that, they will probably discover through the stage hands and others, that it is all mechanical. We will let them keep guessing, don't you see, and the more they guess, the better it will be for us. Diable! How will it do for you or Edouard to be running in touching buttons on her back every time she moves or sings. Don't you see it would be preposterous. It will never do."

Jacques knew that sooner or later his Uncle Pierre would become aware of the new addition to the family, and he decided, with M. Jolie, that it would be better now to let him into the secret. Uncle Pierre, who was fast becoming a famous inventor in the construction of new appliances, was called next day to the manager's office. And when it was explained to him that his nephews had invented and built the wonderful automatic woman he was amazed and delighted. M. Jolie explained to him the necessity for doing away with the buttons on the figure's back.

"Quite simple," replied Pierre, smiling, "Why a switchboard is what you want. This can be placed in the flies, the buttons all done away with, and the figure operated without the knowledge or sight of the audience. Fine wires, invisible from the other side of the foot-lights, can be used and no one will be aware of the fact."

M. Jolie paced the floor. "Get to work at once," he said, "get your switchboard in, and have it ready as soon as possible. Never mind the expense."

Pierre nodded his head. "I can do it in one day. Quite simple. And Jacques can operate it at once, upon its completion."

Mlle. L'Inconnue was to remain in the manager's office for the present. No one was to see her, except those directly interested, until her debut the ensuing month.

It's a queer thing," said Edouard, stretching himself out wearily on his humble bed one night, for he had worked many extra hours at the establishment that day. "Indeed, it is strange that I should love that inanimate thing! I see her face constantly before me; I feel as though she recognizes me. Pagans worship idols; men love dogs, and women, cats and birds—but who ever thought of loving a mechanical toy like this! Young children love their dolls. American children love their Teddy bears. And some old maids really love their senseless, whining poodles and chattering parrots. But here I am, dead in love with Mlle. L'Inconnue—a plaster cast covered over with wax, and all fraud—every particle of her a deception; false hair, false eyes, false teeth; her interior filled with electric appliances, watts, wires, springs, hinges and a thousand devices and complications; she is full of clocks and machinery, a new kind of phonograph and receptacles for records—a most inhuman mon-

ster in every way—and still I love her! I love every particle of this made-up monstrosity. Her face seems more beautiful than Marie's. Her voice, if possible, is far sweeter. That golden hair, that heavenly smile, that tender, loving expression in her eyes—I cannot help it—I love this mechanical toy. To me she seems divine. Yes, I love the great Mlle. L'Inconnue! I know I am a fool—but what matter?" Then he laughed, and said earnestly, "At least she will remain true to me and will never go astray."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE manager had secured, by the aid of a famous photographer, a beautiful colored portrait of the "coming star," and these portraits were being circulated and posted in the leading windows and prominent places in Paris. Jacques appeared to possess greater

executive ability and skill than Edouard, and nearly all the management of the enterprise was committed to him. Although but twenty years of age, Jacques Lu-



vois was one of the most prominent students in the city of Paris, and he was fast proving himself to be a genuine genius. He never rested whenever the slightest imperfection was discovered in the completion of the wonderful woman. He studied far into the night, devouring every recent publication on the subject of electricity. He had planned out every new improvement and design applicable to the interior works of the figure, and was about to proclaim Mlle. L'Inconnue as perfect a woman as mechanism could make her.

No famous work was ever accomplished in the world without the originators undergoing and experiencing some great disappointment. M. Jolie, some time prior to the debut of Mlle. L'Inconnue at the Varieties, sat in a prominent cafe chantant along the Bois de Boulogne, talking earnestly with four well-dressed, gentlemanly appearing men of mature age.

"It is a dangerous experiment," said M. Cabanel. "As one of the Board of Directors, I am decidedly opposed to it."

"Not so strenuous, my dear Cabanel," remarked M. Rousseau, who was smoking his cigarette quietly and leaning back in his chair.

Monsieur Merri remarked, "Let us give the matter full consideration before coming to a decision. I am rather in favor of having the figure perform, provided there is no possible chance of a failure."

Cabanel rose to his feet, remarking, in an excited manner, "It is the most preposterous thing I have ever heard of. The introduction of this woman upon the stage will invite the attention of all the scientists of Paris. The movement of the figure will be scrutinized, and no doubt it will cause the most intense excitement that has been produced upon any stage for a century. What I fear is that it will be a failure; that the singing will give out in the middle of a song, and the most absurd con-

sequences will result from her introduction, and we will become butts for ridicule among our friends and every other proprietor will regard us as 'failed humbugs.' ”

M. Chavet sat sipping his claret, and said nothing.

After a long pause in the conversation, Rousseau remarked. “Why not have M. Jolie invite those boys who have perpetrated this monstrosity, or whatever you may call it, to a meeting—dinner—if you like, and have them explain to us the entire workings of this proposed figure; how it can be operated; how long the songs will last, and every feature of—what-you-call her?” (looking at M. Jolie). M. Jolie replied, smiling, “The coming songstress of France—Mlle. L’Inconnue.”

“I think we are creating a tempest in a teapot,” remarked Merri. “If this figure has proved a success before M. Jolie, and he is satisfied that it will work smoothly, why not let us give the performance as advertised?”

Cabanel insisted that the meeting with young Luvois, who had charge of the enterprise, take place at once, and preparations were made to meet for dinner at the Lion d’Or the ensuing evening.

At the dinner, the four directors, together with M. Jolie and Jacques and Edouard, completed the assemblage. Uncle Pierre was to be called in later, if necessary, to explain some of the effects of elec-

trical power. After the dinner was over, the seats were moved back from the table and a good brand of cigars and wine brought on, and the company decided that they would pass upon this important subject before they left—even though it should take till after midnight to finish the discussion.

“Let me ask,” said Cabanal to Jacques, “how you are going to produce good singing from one of those abominable phonographs. I detest them!”

Edouard colored slightly but remained silent.

“At first,” said Jacques, rising to his feet—

“Sit down, my dear sir, this is nothing but a little dissertation,” said M. Rousseau, not a banquet.”

“Let us take one point at a time,” remarked Cabanel, “and discuss them. I would like to ask one question, and the other gentlemen may follow suit. I have never yet heard,” continued Cabanel, “a phonograph that gave a clear and perfect impersonation of the human voice.”

“Now, if you will give me time,” replied Jacques, “I will express as well as I can the workings of the instruments that will be placed in the interior of Mlle. L’Inconnue. Upon a second consideration and considerable study, we decided that the grating noise in the phonograph prior to running the record, no matter how perfect the instrument might be, is due largely to the friction between the needle and the record. So, we have decided to place, in the proper position within the figure, an entirely new invention which we call the ‘Magnet-graph,’ and this new instrument will produce the

sound without any grating or scratching noise, so prevalent in the average phonographs. This phenomenon is produced by recording on a tempered steel wire which passes through the pole of an electro-magnet, the current of which is controlled in intensity and direction of flow by the diaphragm receiving the original sound waves to be recorded—the magnet being very similar in principle to that contained in the ordinary Bell receiver in common use as a receiver for telephones—the tempered steel wire, or ‘magnetgraph’ proper, being magnetized, as it passes the pole referred to, with various intensities and polarities of magnetism. The magnetism of this wire is very unhomogeneous, yet the magnetism does not diffuse itself along the wire, but retains its original differentially magnetized condition as to intensity, polarity, etc., and is employed to reproduce the sounds in the recording apparatus—which is very similar to that of the recording apparatus, the operation being simply reversed.”

“How many Watts will be required to operate this woman?”

“550 Watts of energy,” replied Jacques.

“If you will permit me,” continued Jacques, “I will give you a brief synopsis of the operation of the figure, and the methods to be employed to create the singing and moving, as well as I can. For instance, one button would close a circuit which would energize a small solenoid, which would actuate a soft iron plunger attached to the small

levers and cams connected with the lips of the figure. By this circuit she can be made to smile or move her lips while speaking."

"How are you going to compel the movement of her feet, so she can walk?" said Cabanel.

"Electro-magnets, placed in the stage floor, will operate the movement of her feet. The magnets could be energized," continued Jacques, "from behind the scenes, in combinations. The switchboard could be operated in various series of combinations, according to the combinations of electro-magnets to be energized, necessary to produce the various movements of the figure's limbs."

"How are you going to prevent the figure from toppling over?" remarked Cabanel, with a sneer.

"There are two ways. But I think the best one," said Jacques, "is to hold the figure in a position of buoyancy by means of a weight underneath the stage, connected by a very thin, highly-tempered steel rod, practically invisible to the audience—the steel rod passing through the stage, and following convolutions through the stage as the figure makes its movements about."

"How are you going to prevent the figure from failing to sing at the proper time; or to have it talk at the proper time?" inquired Merri.

Jacques replied: "We have a most unique method of causing the figure to sing and talk at the time desired. We have resorted to the wireless telegraphy principle, very similar to that proposed by inventors of war machinery for firing mines,

unconnected by any metallic circuit whatsoever. The oscillating apparatus, located behind the scenes, can send forth its Hertzian waves and actuate a small coherer tuned, or synchronized, to the oscillator behind the scenes intended for energizing it. The coherer closes a local circuit, which circuit controls the mechanism of the speaking apparatus. A similiar apparatus can be used for actuating the singing 'magnetgraph.' "

"I would like to ask," said Rousseau, "how it will be possible to create artificial animation in the face of this figure?"

"Well," replied Jacques, "in that we are certainly laboring under a slight disadvantage. We have had great trouble to create the proper expression in the eyes of the figure. But we have decided that this can be completely overcome by patience and a little ingenuity. The original of our artificial woman has posed in the song, or act, which we are to reproduce, and a complete set of photographic films made of the entire act. These films can be enlarged and the expression of the eyes reproduced by a proper, competent artist, depicting their expressions throughout their variegated series."

"Now, gentlemen, would you like any further information on the subject?" asked Jacques.

"Cabanel, I see you have succumbed," said Rousseau.

"Yes, I must admit that I have determined to give these young men a chance to display this wonderful automaton. They can draw on me for

all the money they want to perfect this marvelous piece of mechanism. I will therefore ask that we pass a resolution at this meeting, as a board of directors, that the debut of Mlle. ———— what the devil do you call it?" "‘The Unknown,’ in English," replied Rousseau. "So, I will ask Merri to act as chairman of this meeting."

"Well, gentlemen, what is your pleasure?" said Merri, taking a long sip of Veuve Clicquot, that had been ordered by M. Jolie during that time in the discussion when Cabanel had subsided.

The resolution was adopted by a decisive vote, all rising to their feet and taking a sip out of the beautiful champagne glasses of Lion d'Or.

CHAPTER IX.

AT last the evening came when Mlle. L'Inconnue was to make her debut. The theatre was crowded. Many smiled with incredulity as the figure moved out upon the center of the stage. "The sweetest voice I ever heard," remarked an old habitue of the place, after the first verse.



At the conclusion of the song, the applause was deafening. And as Mlle. L'Inconnue backed off the stage, she replied, "Thank you" and smiled

sweetly.

The directors occupied a box, and frequently applauded. But M. Jolie sat in one of the front rows in the audience. At first he was exceedingly nervous. But, at the conclusion of the song, he was supremely happy. Jacques and Edouard devoted their entire time to operating the wires, and were assisted by Uncle Pierre, who occupied a chair in the flies.

"Mon Dieu! the marvel of the twentieth century!" said M. Jolie to his wife, who sat at his right. "Francs? Who cares for francs? I will give these boys all the money they want. Thousands upon

thousands will pour into our treasury. Bravo, bravo!" he sang out, with a thousand other voices, as Mlle. L'Inconnue returned after a third encore.

After the act of Mlle. L'Inconnue, Edouard rushed to the box in which were seated Marie and her aunt. Marie was pale, and tears stood in her eyes.

"What does all this mean?" she whispered to Edouard. "My voice, my songs, my face. Edouard, why have you done this? This woman's figure is copied after me."

The aunt, partially deaf, and deeply engrossed with the performance, failed to overhear their conversation or comprehend the significance of the occasion.

"Because, Marie," Edouard replied, "I love you. I love you dearly. Jacques and I are to blame. But you will forgive me, won't you? The figure is a wonderful success and our fortunes are made."

"Ah," said Marie, drying her tears, "now I know why you desired me to sing into the records."

"Marie," Edouard whispered, still holding her hand, "there was no other voice in Paris that suited me so well. Did your aunt recognize your voice?"

"No," said Marie, looking up into Edouard's face lovingly, "but she said the figure resembled me. She never paid much attention to my singing any way."

"Say nothing, Marie, to any one; tell no one of this secret, for the figure on the stage will soon become famous."

"You have not called on me for two weeks," she replied, looking earnestly in his face.

"The reason is good," said Edouard, "I have worked day and night to get the figure ready. I will now call regularly, and next week I must ask you for some more songs."

Marie shook her head. "No, no, Marie. Don't shake your head, because we are under a contract to furnish new songs every week, and you will be paid handsomely, my dear."

"Then," said Marie, her cheeks flushing crimson, "I will never sing for you again."

Edouard, seeing the mistake he had made, remarked to himself, "I must pretend to love her, or she will never sing again."

"This figure," continued Edouard, "is our invention. It is our pride. We love it. That is, I love it; Jacques loves only fame. You know, Marie, I mean to say I love this inanimate thing as you would love a picture or statue. 'Mlle. L'Inconnue' shall never sing a song except by the aid of your loving voice, dear, good Marie."

"Think of it, Marie," said Edouard, as he caught her hand again. "Thousands upon thousands will hear that voice the first week. Many believe the creature is alive, and all the accessories merely serve to humbug the audience. How would it do, my sweet Marie, to have some cracked, wheezy,

loud vaudeville woman's voice yelling into the records after you? Ah, Marie, see how the audience was charmed. M. Jolie, the proprietor of the theatre, said it was the sweetest voice he had ever heard. Should you refuse to sing again we shall be ruined, and, worse than all, made ridiculous for the balance of our lives."

Mlle. L'Inconnue had left the stage, and another performance was on. Edouard remained in the box, and Marie was happy. She thought of the nice things Edouard had said about her voice, and how kind he had been to her, and of the pretty flowers he had sent her when he could not come.

"Now I understand," she whispered to Edouard, "why the old man who makes wax figures wanted me to pose."

"Yes," said Edouard, "I must admit, Marie, we tried every device known to get you to permit a cast to be made of your face, and even then we failed. But the photograph you gave me answered the purpose."

"Bad boy," said Marie, smiling. "However, now, as it is all explained, I do not care so much. I sincerely hope you will prosper by it, my dear Edouard."

The words, "dear Edouard," so familiar by reason of the records, startled Edouard.

"Yes, yes," he said, "Marie, Jacques has just made a splendid contract with M. Jolie, the manager, for a year. We will have all the money we need, and more than enough—but, Marie, without

your voice, how would we accomplish the fulfillment of the contract? You must look at this in the right way!"

"I know what I will do," said Edouard, thoughtfully. "Your poor aunt has struggled all her life, but still owes money on the cottage. I heard of this from Madame Bogaire. Your aunt owes 2,500 francs. Say nothing, Marie. If your voice can earn that sum, pay that debt, it is proper that you should do so. She is the best friend you have on earth."

Marie's beautiful eyes peered into Edouard's face inquiringly—Does he love me? Then she held her head down, and remained silent.

"Say nothing now," said Edouard. "Do not say one word about it, and everything will come out right. Good night, dear Marie." And Edouard returned to the stage.

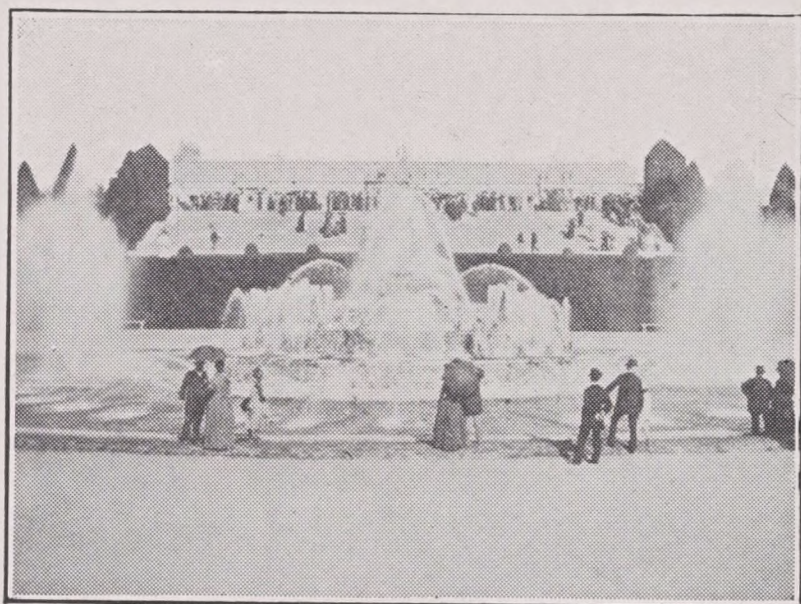
CHAPTER X.

M. JOLIE and a few friends, including Jacques and Edouard, also Pierre—who had watched the performance of the new star with great interest—had supper at the close of the theatre that night. The directors, tired with anxiety, separated and retired to their

homes. Jolie praised the young men for their genius, and bespoke a great career for them.

“Keep on with your work,” he said, “Don’t lose your head. Keep

good company; keep good hours; become indifferent to the wiles of many of the vaudeville performers. Take my advice and never drink. Follow me, I never drink a drop. Strange as it may appear, I have been the manager of various theatres for twenty-two years, and have never tasted one drop of liquor of any kind. I drink only boiled water and weak coffee. I have been successful as a theatrical manager all my life. I am healthy, fairly wealthy, and I am positive I am a little wise. Take my advice, my dear young gentlemen, and no matter what people tell you,



keep away from bad company, and don't drink. I am positive you will succeed; you cannot help it."

Pierre also remarked that he had adopted the same principle for many years—at which remark M. Jolie patted Uncle Pierre upon the shoulder and said, "Then I think the boys are safe; they take after you."

Jacques was more of a philosopher than Edouard. He looked upon the cold, real side of life. He cared nothing for the frivolities, romances and pleasures of a great city. Work, work, work—all day and half the night, he preferred. Now, as their success was assured, however, he intended to rest and work only during the hours allotted at the shop. This work he kept up to enable him to secure the advice and aid of Uncle Pierre and others.

Edouard occasionally found himself meandering down the Cours de Vincennes to have a chat with Marie. He had arranged several new songs for the coming week, and Mlle. L'Inconnue's repertoire was complete.

The Varieties was crowded nightly, and hundreds were unable to gain admission. Seats were secured three, four and even six weeks in advance.

Mlle. L'Inconnue was fast becoming the hit of the vaudeville stage. M. Jolie had noticed a great change in the character of his audience. Scientists, noted throughout France, prominent authors, great mechanics, wonderful inventors, together with their families, flocked to the theatre to hear the new star. It mattered not whether it was a me-

chanical manikin or a live being. Many who knew better made their friends believe that it was a real woman, covered over with a layer of wax, and that all the wires and paraphernalia were placed about the figure to cause the audience to believe that it was mechanical. Bets were even made by the waiters and frequenters of the various gardens and cafes as to this much discussed question. In fact, thousands seemed to prefer the idea that it was a real live woman, and claimed that it would be impossible to have an automaton sing encores and songs called for. One man became so excited during a performance that he rose in his seat and offered to wager ten thousand francs that the figure was a live woman. M. Jolie, however, coming on the stage during the sensation produced by this betting individual, announced that he would not permit betting in his establishment under any circumstances, and sincerely hoped that the audience would not express any opinion in regard to "Mlle. L'Inconnue," as she was a highly sensitive lady and positively objected to being discussed in that manner. This announcement caused great merriment, and the man who offered to bet apologized, literally believing what the manager had said, "that the lady was sensitive."

One manager, from another cafe, after hearing the songs of Mlle. L'Inconnue, replied to some friends, "Pshaw! It's nothing but a plastered girl with a sweet voice. Bah, you can't fool me. I'll bet she can digest a welsh-rarebit and a bottle of

Roderer after the show, even with her 'electric insides.' Why, that young fellow who sits about watching her I think is her husband. He gazes at her all through the performance." Then they all laughed. "But," continued the outside manager, it's a great ruse, after all, and has fooled half Paris. I wish we could get up something like it."

Edouard was lonesome. The figure at the close of each performance was walked into a side room and securely locked up, and kept from the gaze of the stage-hands and others. She was walked out of this room into another one, especially fitted up for her, and in the evening she was frequently taken out for a ride on the Bois by M. Jolie and Jacques. The manager's automobile, therefore, became the cynosure of all eyes, and the figure was made to perform by the skillful hand of Jacques precisely the same as any woman would while riding in an automobile. This fact, alone, caused so much comment that even the stage carpenters and scene shifters and others connected with the theatre became divided in their opinion as to whether "Mademoiselle" was artificial or human. While sitting in the automobile, Jacques easily manipulated the wires because there was no danger of the figure tipping over, being properly braced by the heavy form of M. Jolie.

One day, at the Longchamp races, while a number of M. Jolie's friends surrounded the automobile, Jacques ordered lemon "squash" for three, having, by an ingenious mechanism arranged to have Mlle.

L'Inconnue drink through a straw. By touching another wire, she gracefully wiped her mouth with her tiny handkerchief (button No. 36). Even the chauffeur was amazed at the performance, and remarked to himself, "By all that's holy, that thing is a live woman after all." And similar remarks were made by bystanders who witnessed the act. One well-known character connected with a cafe chantant remarked to his friends, "Did you see that? There is M. Jolie's manufactured woman drinking lemon squash. Why, I knew she was a humbug all the time. She's as alive as you are."

M. Jolie was highly amused at this incident. He had recognized several acquaintances in the crowd, who, as they passed, peered into the auto to catch a glimpse of the strange woman.

"How did you dispose of the drink?" he whispered to Jacques. "Easily enough," answered Jacques. "I inserted a bottle in the back of the figure, and, by a small suction hose, drew the lemonade into the bottle."

Jolie lay back in his seat, and roared with laughter. "We have them paralyzed at last. They are absolutely uncertain whether the woman is alive or not. What next, what next?" he said to Jacques. "You are originating something new every day. This day at the races means thousands of francs to us. Why, I saw M. Librant, of the Moulon Rouge, ogling us, when the 'Mademoiselle' drank. His face was flushed and he was quite excited. He said to me the other night, 'Jolie, that infernal singing

machine of yours is raising the devil with us all. I believe now she is not a fake woman, but a genuine article.' I replied, 'I take her out for a ride sometimes, because she is remarkably good company, especially for an automatic person.' This made the old man mad, and he shook his fist at me, and shouted in derision, 'You're as big an old fraud, Jolie, as the woman.' After seeing us to-day he will swear all over that it was a real woman, and I will bet he will notify Mme. Jolie that I have been out flirting with some strange woman. That will be the funniest thing that ever happened."

When Edouard heard of Jacques at the Longchamp races, he became dejected. It seemed to him M. Jolie was carrying the deception too far, and he rather objected to their taking "Mademoiselle" out in an automobile in the daytime and exhibiting her before a large concourse of people. Jacques, however, soothed his cousin's fears by arranging a ride for Edouard, Marie and her aunt.

"I dare not go in such a runaway wagon," said Marie's aunt. Marie, however, was delighted at the idea, and soon dispelled her fears. The following Sunday after the Longchamp races episode, the chauffeur called for Edouard.

It appeared that the morning prior to this Mme. Bogaire had heard that the mortgage on Mme. Placide's (Marie's aunt's) cottage had become due, and payment had been demanded, the usual extension upon payment of interest having been denied by Lorillard et Cie, who, acting for their client, were

compelled to collect the amount now past due. Marie had, by diligence, succeeded in selling some valuable chickens and collecting all her milk-bills up to date, and thus raised a small part of the sum. But the second notice came, stating that all must be paid—every franc—at once. Edouard had the money to spare. He called that day, Saturday, at the loan department of the bank, and paid the encumbrance in full, and secured the release. When he called at the cottage he found Mme. Placide weeping bitterly, while Marie was trying to comfort her. “Never mind, dear Auntie,” said Marie. “I am young; I can work. Perhaps we can borrow part of the money, and I have saved 200 francs.”

“My darling child,” the old lady said through her tears, “I would not care to live a minute but for you. For ten long years I have struggled to pay this sum. It was at one time 3,500 francs, and all I could do was to pay it down to the present amount. The cottage is now old; it needs painting, and no one will loan the amount necessary to pay off the debt.”

As she talked, and Marie stood with her hands caressing her, a knock was heard at the door. It was Edouard. While the old lady held her apron to her face, to hide her tears, Marie explained to Edouard the cause of her trouble.

“You must not cry to-day, my dear Madame, not to-day,” said Edouard.

The old lady looked up and tried to smile, but she was so bewildered in her grief that she scarcely recognized Edouard's voice.

"You believe, my dear Madame, that there is a mortgage on this house," he said, "but it is on the house no longer. It is in the house—and here it is." Saying this, he held the cancelled document high above her sorrowing old head. He spoke loud, so the old lady could hear, "It is paid, and it is yours. Do you understand? You heard the figure sing?"

"Yes," the old lady said, turning slightly pale, while tears coursed down her cheeks. "Yes, yes," she replied, "at the theatre."

"That voice you heard was Marie's."

But the poor old lady could not comprehend.

"Marie has earned enough to pay off the mortgage."

The old woman stared vacantly, and shook her head as if in doubt. Then she exclaimed, "It was Marie's face! I did not hear the singing in the box."

Edouard, with some difficulty, finally convinced the old woman that Marie was responsible in some way for the success of the figure she had seen in the theatre, and it dawned upon her that, through some marvelous invention and the aid of Marie's voice, the good luck so long expected had at last arrived. And then she hid her face in her apron and wept for real joy.

Edouard turned towards the door and met the gaze of Marie. All the love, tenderness and affection she possessed seemed to be expressed in her glance. She appeared to Edouard to be at that moment almost divine. Her face resembled the angel's he had seen portrayed by the old masters in the Louvre.

"Are you sure it is the proper thing to do, Edouard," she said, "to take this money?"

Edouard was human. He folded Marie in his arms and kissed her passionately, remarking several times that he was quite sure it was the correct thing to do.

Edouard then bade them dress for the auto ride. And, as they disappeared into the bedroom, to don their wraps, he leaned against the door of the cottage, and remarked to himself, "I wonder what Mlle. L'Inconnue will think of all this?"

As they flew along the boulevards and meandered through the parks, Mme. Placide, with her mortgage tucked away carefully in her spacious pocket, opened conversation with the chauffeur who occupied the front seat with her. Marie had provided two large sofa pillows, and, while the old lady, as comfortable as possible, glided along, she told Jolie's chauffeur there was an old adage she had learned when a girl—that "Joy and sorrow are not often found long apart."

Marie and Edouard, in the back seat, discussed the new songs for the coming week.

"What will you do when the year is up at the Varieties?" asked Marie.

"Really, I don't quite know now. I think we shall tour over Europe, and possibly we may go to America."

"I suppose by that time they will have tired of my voice," said Marie.

"If you go to London with us, you must learn some English songs."

Marie smiled. "Can I do it? It is very difficult to learn English. My music teacher has instructed me, and I can sing quite a number of English songs already."

"However," replied Edouard, "why talk of the future? If we go to London we must take you with us."

"That would not do at all," said Marie.

"Why not, if we take Aunt Placide along too?" said the boy.

As they stopped at a cafe to get a sandwich and a cup of coffee, Edouard got out, and, as he was about to hand a tray the waiter had brought out to Mme. Placide and Marie, he overheard a young man say, with an oath, "There is that wax figure performing at the Varieties." The stranger also said, "Why that young fellow with her is the one who sits in the front row and watches her every night."

Marie turned slightly pale.

"Never mind, say nothing," said Edouard. "Never pay any attention to the statement of an

insolent fop. He probably saw me at the theatre, and his casual remark is not worthy of attention."

Maire, however, became very thoughtful, but did not again refer to the accident.

After the drive, Edouard wandered down to the theatre, and took a look in at Mlle. L'Inconnue and readjusted one of her songs in the new record. He took a long look at the face. "Yes, there was that expression; almost divine and incomparable. She is, indeed, more magnificent even than Marie. Poor Mademoiselle, did they take you out, to have the horde gaze at you with their rude eyes and offer their insolent remarks about you?" Taking a last look at the figure, he again bid her good-bye, and, touching the small lever, the figure again repeated, "Good night, good night, my dear Edouard, good night." Then locking the door securely, he sent the key to the office of M. Jolie. He dined at a cafe, as Jacques would not be down until 7:30.

Strange as it may appear, although Edouard was becoming more and more interested in the character of the little milk-carrier, still, in his heart of hearts, the manufactured automaton held the secret of his heart. When he kissed Marie it was the affection of a boy, for Edouard was then only nineteen, and because he thought she duly appreciated his act of kindness in paying off the mortgage on the old lady's cottage. And small wonder he experienced this brotherly affection for the poor young girl, because she had done so much to aid him in his enterprise.

Marie, of course, thought differently. But Marie was possessed of good judgment and a strong will, and sincerely believed in doing right, regardless of consequences. When she overheard the remark at the cafe, in which her resemblance to the wax figure was noticeable, she was dismayed, and determined that at the end of the year she would sing no more for the records and decline to accompany Edouard and Jacques to Europe or America, even though Aunt Placide became one of the party.

“Vaudeville business,” said Marie, “is at most a method of earning a living; not much superior to selling milk—not so respectable at all events.”

Now, while poor Marie thought all this, she had forgotten the wiles of a certain little busybody, named Cupid, who frequently compelled people to do things—sometimes against their better judgment.

CHAPTER XI.

THE fame of the wonderful woman of the Varieties continued to spread, and every night, for weeks, hundreds were unable to gain admission. At the hour of her appearance, those who held seats for other theatres thronged the doors of the Varieties, to catch a



glimpse of her and hear her sing a verse, and then return to the other respective play-houses.

As Edouard, when not on watch, heard the singing of Mlle.

L'Inconnue, he noticed that other men in the audience had become, evidently, as infatuated as he was, because they occupied seats night after night and usually left the theatre after the retirement of Mademoiselle. This annoyed him slightly. But Jacques, the practical, said, "What nonsense. Why, the more the merrier. If Mademoiselle had a million idiotic lovers, so much the better. Any man who will fall in love with an automaton would probably fall in love with a haystack or a telegraph pole."

"They believe she's human," replied Edouard, preferring not to discuss the subject further.

One night as "Mademoiselle" was about to retire, some one in the audience threw a rose on the stage. By wonderfully quick action, Jacques manipulated the wires so that the figure picked up the rose, bowed gracefully, and said, "Thank you, thank you."

M. Jolie, in the next programme, announced that patrons would confer a great favor, upon all future occasions, in declining to throw or place floral tributes upon the stage. After Jacques' remarks about "idiotic lovers," Edouard made a great attempt to entertain more genuine affection for Marie. Now, as the interest upon the cottage debt had ceased to fall due at certain periods, Aunt Placide demanded that Marie should buy a new dress and a new, stylish hat; and young Lefevre, a boy who lived opposite, agreed to deliver the milk for fifteen francs a week, which relieved Marie from a two-mile tramp every morning and the additional exercise of climbing numerous flights of stairs. Marie was given many lessons in singing, by a new teacher who had moved into the neighborhood; and one day a cart backed up to the cottage, containing a large box with three powerful men seated upon the top. One got out and inquired if 'Mme. Placide lived here.' Marie was amazed. The card said:

"Edouard to Marie, on her birthday."

Marie turned a variety of colors all at once. But when her excitement had subdued, she danced about the room like a fairy.

"Why, auntie, auntie, it's a piano! A magnificent, lovely piano. Why, auntie dear, what shall we do? What a splendid present—and it's from Edouard, too."

"Oh dear," replied the old lady, while tears glistened in her eyes, "that boy is so good to us. And he will say that your voice earned it all."

Three powerful men were bringing in the big box, while Marie was hunting in the attic for a hammer and screw driver. Then she danced about the room and sang little bits of songs she had been rehearsing so charmingly that even the red-faced piano-movers grinned and smiled with delight.

"Dear Edouard, so kind—so true!" she exclaimed aloud—and then she blushed at her recklessness, fearing that the piano-movers might know Edouard.

"Good instrument," said the leader of the men. "Good maker, grand tone. My daughter plays one of these."

Then they left, after packing up, but soon returned with another box. It contained a beautiful cover and handsome mahogany stool wide enough for two.

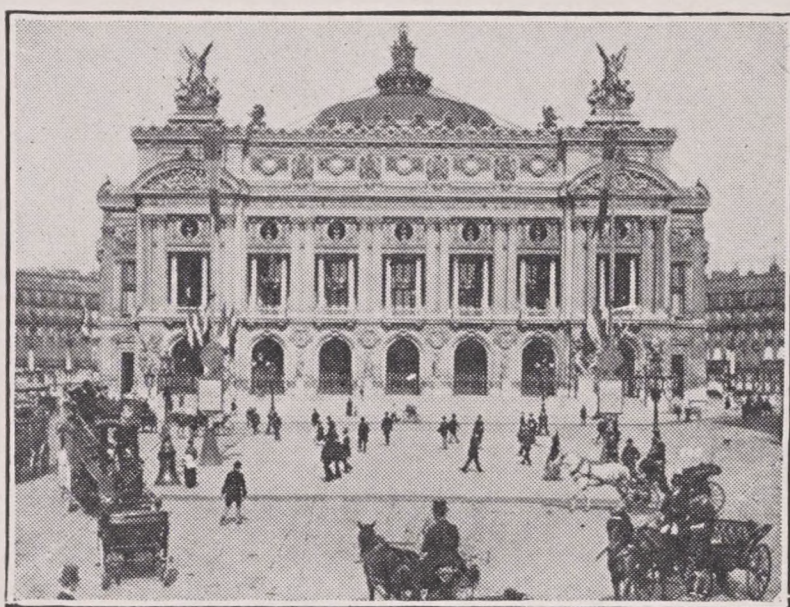
"Complete," said the leader. And when Marie signed a receipt for the contents of the boxes, they disappeared, whistling merrily, because Mme. Placide had given to each of the men a hot cup of tea and a cake.

Every week, when the new songs were sung by the figure, Marie and Aunt Placide had a box; but

Edouard had arranged it so they could not be seen by the audience. The fact that now half a dozen young men, and nearly a dozen very old ones, seemed infatuated with "Mademoiselle" failed to make much impression on Edouard, as he looked in their faces from his front row seat and frequently smiled, remarking, "In love with an automaton—'a hay-stack or a telegraph pole'—poor, silly, old things. I wonder if they will ever get over it."

CHAPTER XII.

SUCCESS followed success. There was scarcely a night during the entire year when hundreds, unable to secure seats, were not turned away. The seating capacity of the Varieties had been enlarged and the foyer reduced in size. At this time, comparatively few people in



Paris believed the figure was a human. Stage hands and employes about the theatre, naturally, had spied about and noticed the electricians at work, fixing

wires and inserting machinery. They had also noticed the operation of the wires and knew of the immense weight of the automaton. Without being operated, it required the combined effort of three or four strong men to raise her body from the floor. Owing to the marvelous ingenuity of Jacques, however, she was made to ascend or descend stairs, and even to enter a carriage or automobile quite gracefully. It was this fact that made it thoroughly evident to the small boy and the loungers and hangers-on about the theatre that the figure was a live person, and it was generally sup-

posed by a certain class at this time that all the buttons and electrical appliances were simply used to deceive.

M. Jolie, being of a generous disposition for a manager, and especially as the year's contract had expired and they had run over the time, upon the same terms, for nearly three months, decided that, in addition to the enormous salary already paid to Jacques and Edouard, a percentage of the receipts should also be awarded to the inventors—at least until "Mademoiselle" ceased to be the great attraction she now was.

Edouard called upon Marie more frequently. She studied many hours a day at her music, and the piano proved a great aid. Edouard could play accompaniments very well, and together they ran over the new songs, and when one appealed to Edouard, Marie sang it into the records.

Edouard was fast becoming rich; for the cousins, under the scrutinizing eye of M. Jolie, were saving their money and keeping aloof from bad company. M. Jolie had taken such a fancy to the taciturn and quiet Jacques that he frequently sat for an hour or more, watching him work upon some new invention respecting the automaton. They had ceased to work at the electrical establishment except for the purpose of making experiments, and every facility was tendered to them by the firm for that purpose.

Uncle Pierre, also, had by this time become famous for his remarkable inventions of electric toys.

The latest present Edouard had bestowed upon the Placide family was a handsome milk-wagon, two fine large horses, and a dozen Jersey cows with a pedigree, the purchase of three new milk-routes, and the leasing of a valuable pasture. This fact had set Mme. Placide upon the pinnacle of prosperity, for—being an industrious and frugal old woman—her income was soon quadrupled and she started a bank account.

Edouard's latest whim was to see Marie garbed precisely like "Mlle. L'Inconnue" when she sang—same style of hat and stage dress. To this proposition at first Marie raised a serious objection.

"Out of place, out of place," she said, "for me, a milk girl."

"A milk girl with a queenly disposition is, in fact, a queen, my dear Marie. I know you will please me."

Marie placed her hand affectionately upon Edouard's shoulder, and said, "Where shall we go to be fitted?"

"Picard," said Edouard.

"Impossible!" replied Marie. "She is one of our customers; she will think wrong of me."

"She cannot do that," said Edouard. "I will explain the situation, as I did about Mlle. L'Inconnue's dress. I told Mme. Picard that that dress was made to go to America."

"Bad boy! You told a ——."

"It was not true," said Edouard, "but diplomatic."

The next morning Edouard and Marie, in a taxicab, were driving furiously along the streets, en-route to Mme. Picard's. The Madame was not in her shop; she had gone to London. So Marie's fears were unfounded, because Mme. Picard had always instructed her employes never to ask questions of anybody. Edouard watched, with patience, the many fittings, and was always present to make suggestions—while Jacques was wondering where Edouard spent so much of his time. Finally the glorious gown was complete, and Marie appeared so beautiful in it that Edouard's eyes feasted upon her. "Perhaps that's the real Mlle. L'Inconnue," he said, "after all!" The selection of a hat was less difficult. Marie's pretty face and head seemed to fit any hat, no matter how atrocious it appeared upon the head of another.

Edouard had a double object in securing the grand dress for Marie. First, it would be a pleasant reminder of "Mlle. L'Inconnue" and second, His Majesty, King Edward of England, was about to visit Paris, and the hint had been thrown out to M. Jolie that perhaps a special performance of the wonderful figure might be requested for His Majesty, as one of the numerous entertainments to be provided.

M. Jolie and Jacques were sitting in the former's private room, after a luncheon, when a mes-

senger from the Grand Opera House handed M. Jolie a note, which read as follows:

“Grand Opera House, Paris, to-day (Wednesday,) M. Jolie: My Dear Sir—The committee appointed for the purpose of entertaining His Majesty, King Edward of England, has decided that, if agreeable to you and the owners of ‘Mlle. L’Inconnue—the wonderful automatic singing lady, a special performance be tendered by you, one week from this (Wednesday) night, between the second and third acts of the grand opera—to be given as an especial entertainment to His Majesty. Kindly reply by bearer.”

“Good!” said M. Jolie, slapping the reserved Jacques upon the shoulder, and the following answer was hurriedly penned to the committee:

“Mlle. L’Inconnue desires to reply to your most kind proposition, and to state that she is highly honored by the proposal to sing before his most gracious Majesty, King Edward of England, and will be most happy to appear at the Grand Opera House, upon the night selected, between the second and third acts of the opera.

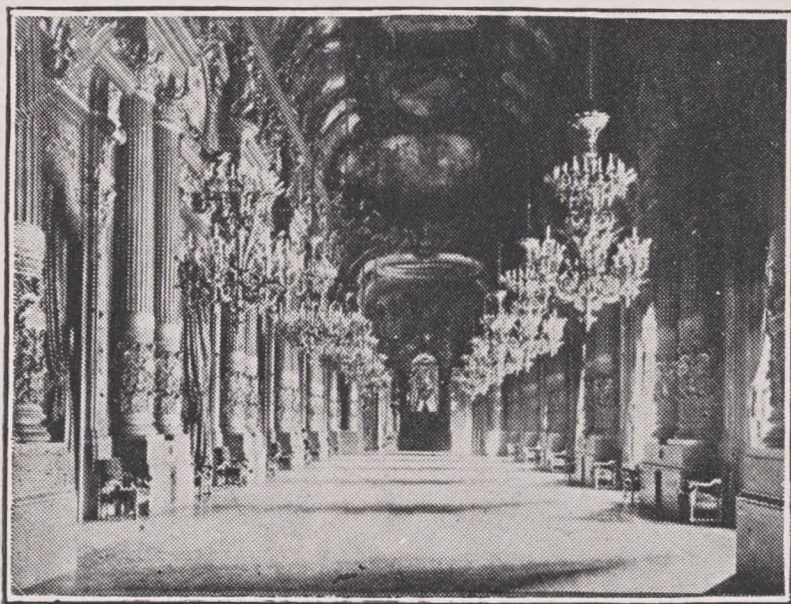
“Thanking you again sincerely for this most gracious invitation, I am, obediently yours, Mlle. L’Inconnue.”

This answer was exhibited to the king one day while at luncheon with the President of France,

and when His Majesty learned that the reply was from the wonderful automatic lady, over her signature, he laughed heartily and begged to be permitted to retain the same as a souvenir of his visit.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT last the eventful day arrived. The great opera house—the pride of music-loving France—was crowded by the most distinguished assemblage that ever graced its magnificent interior. Edouard had provided a side box for Marie. In her beautiful new gown she was



a princess, indeed.

The pretty milkmaid seemed to be lifted out of the realm of peasantry into an atmosphere of refined aristocracy for the occasion. She was a picture un-

equalled by even the most superb beauties present. Mme. Placide was not very well, and remained at home. The music teacher, a middle-aged English lady of refinement and education, had accepted Marie's invitation to occupy the box with her and was also delighted at the chance to see the king.

M. Jolie was decidedly nervous all the evening. "I hope nothing will go wrong," he said, "because Mme. Jolie, the night previous, had a dream, in which she thought she heard a great crash—like a building falling." He was also additionally excited, fearing that a failure before the king would mean an unsuccessful trip through England. Should

“Mademoiselle’s” singing, however, please the king, it meant a more successful trip than could otherwise be contemplated.

The stern and taciturn Jacques appeared quite calm, and had nothing to say. He had arranged everything, and was satisfied as to the success of the evening.

A room off the great stage had been assigned to Jacques and Edouard, and M. Jolie, who appeared in the foyer, was being congratulated by his many acquaintances. Marie and her music teacher had arrived, and Edouard saw to it that they were made quite comfortable in their box, from which point they could witness the arrival of those ascending the stairs by the principal lobby. His Majesty and the President were not expected until the end of the first act. Their large box was tastefully decorated by a brilliant display of flowers, also flags of both countries.

Jacques had completed the last details for “Mademoiselle’s” act, and Edouard had just been called to render any assistance necessary. As Edouard entered the room containing the figure, the door slammed, owing to a draught from the hallway to the open window in the room in which Mlle. L’Inconnue was stationed.

There was a crash!

Jacques, who was arranging an electrical appliance, jumped to his feet. “It’s all over,” he said.

Edouard caught Mlle. L’Inconnue as she was about to topple over. A heavy piece of statuary,

resting insecurely upon an upper shelf in the room, had fallen, owing to the concussion caused by the slamming of the door, straight down upon the head and shoulders of Mlle. L'Inconnue, caving in her graceful head, leaving a great hole in the waxen plaster and smashing some of her features into small pieces. Immediately a small flame shot out through the cavity in her head.

"All gone," said Jacques, with a grim smile, as he quickly disconnected the wire running through the head of the automaton. Jacques worked rapidly, but not quick enough to prevent the entire destruction of "Mademoiselle's" beautiful golden hair. There she stood, after Edouard had braced her up—a dismal, forlorn and complete wreck.

"No performance to-night," said Jacques, calmly, looking at his watch, "and it is twenty minutes to ten, nearing the time for us to be ready for the first call."

Edouard stood gazing at the ruined face of his wonderful design. His quick wit never deserted him.

"Jacques," he exclaimed excitedly, "We will give the show."

"Nonsense," said Jacques, "impossible!"

"Stay right here. Say nothing. Not one word to any one. I shall return in ten minutes. Let no one know of the accident. We will give the show!" Then Edouard hurriedly left the room.

A smell of burnt hair brought an inquiry from the firemen on watch, who knocked at the door. But

Jacques informed them it was merely a slight accident produced by the crossing of two wires and the burning of some artificial hair in the room—that it was of no consequence; the wire had been cut, and the fire was out.

A message soon came that in less than half an hour, the call might come for Mlle. L'Inconnue to appear. Jacques smiled, and replied, "All right, we shall be ready—So Edouard says." As Jacques made this remark he was not positive in his mind as to the manner in which "Mademoiselle" could be made ready, but, to please Edouard, he kept his promise and said nothing.

Edouard rushed to the box occupied by Marie "Marie," he said, as calmly as possible under the circumstances, "something has happened. The figure is destroyed, and with it all our hopes have perished. What can we do?"

Mme. Glenning, Marie's music teacher, who occupied the box with her, did not comprehend the meaning of the destruction of the figure, and she said, "Then there will be no performance to-night?"

"Yes, there will," replied Edouard, still firm in his conviction that he could induce Marie to go on the stage and sing.

Mme. Glenning, well pleased with the scene presented before her, the opera house containing many distinguished English people of whom she had heard, was so intent on peering through her glasses that she never noticed that Edouard and Marie had left the box. Marie, holding Edouard's hand,

hurried down stairs, and in a few minutes stood face to face with the peerless Mlle. L'Inconnue. When she saw the damaged face of the figure Edouard had so long worked on, tears formed in her eyes and she was about to cry.

"Marie, Marie," Edouard said as he held her close to him, "be a brave girl to-night, for you alone can help us out of this dilemma. No time for tears, my pet. The figure's dress was copied after yours. Her face is a facsimile of yours; her voice is yours; in every respect she represents you. I love you, Marie, as I never expect to love any one again. Will you do me a great favor, Marie?" and he patted her on the shoulder while he held her tightly in his grasp, and said in a low voice, "Go on the stage; pretend you are the figure; sing the same songs that she sings this week, including 'God Save the King' and the 'Marseillaise.'"

Jacques stood by with his mouth wide open, but catching every word, with intense excitement. "Jacques, do you know what I am going to do?"

Jacques tried to remain calm, but he couldn't. His face turned deathly pale. He forced the color back to his lips, and said, "Edouard, I am with you. I will operate the live figure the same as the automaton, and they will never know the difference. But I will turn on no voltage. I will fasten the string of buttons down her back, though, and they will be deceived."

"Marie," said Jacques, "You have seen the figure operated. Can you perform as she does?"

Marie was also a little pale, but there was a determined expression on her face which indicated that she would brave everything to help them out. She gazed a second at the ruined figure, and then at Edouard, who, pale and trembling, awaited her answer.

"Edouard!" Marie exclaimed, while the crimson mounted her cheek again, "I have decided; I'll do it for you, and I will make a success; fear not, I know every movement of the figure and every word of the songs. Keep your own nerve. Never mind me!"

Jacques, almost paralyzed by the turn in events, quickly regained his self-possession, and set to work. He arrayed a string of bright buttons down Marie's back.

"You need not show me how to walk," said Marie, "because I have shown Auntie and the neighbors how 'Mademoiselle' acts a dozen times. Let them toss bouquets at me; I'll pick them up. But Edouard, remember, I'll be your electric lady only for this occasion. I never sang before an audience in my life; but I am not the least bit afraid. I have more nerve than the entire audience. It will be a success. Don't fear!"

The switchboard was moved into place; the call came; Jacques was arranging the numerous wires that were to be attached to Marie's back, but the main electric wire, containing the current was completely shut off. Edouard was himself again. The last call bell sounded, and the great

Mlle. L'Inconnue walked steadily out, in a perfectly accurate straight line to the center of the stage—while Jacques, under the peeping eyes of numerous chorus girls and performers in the Grand Opera, manipulated the key-board precisely as he would have done had the real "Mlle. L'Inconnue" been present.

It would fill a volume to reproduce all the witticisms, comments and remarks respecting the "automaton" tendered by that grand exclusive audience, comprising, as it did, the most scientific men, authors, ambassadors, titled people, those foremost in the army and navy; in fact, the *creme de la creme* of social France.

"Is it possible that woman is not alive?" "It is incredible." "That is the most marvelous creation ever made by the hand of man." "It is, indeed, the marvel of the age; the wonder of the twentieth century." "Merely a mechanical toy," said an aged naturalist, known the world over. "I never expected to have lived to see such a marvelous reproduction of a human form."

King Edward and President Faure, and many of the French cabinet and their ladies, discussed the figure. The King observed through his glasses every movement of the wonderful automaton.

"I have seen," he remarked to the President of France, "the wax figures in Mme. Tussaud's gallery in London; I have often, when a youth, been startled by their remarkable similarity to nature. Frequently there is a wax policeman, or a guard,

standing on a staircase or in a hall, near a live one. and it is almost impossible to distinguish the real one from the imitation. I have actually seen old ladies go up and touch live policemen, imagining them to be wax figures. But this creation, I must admit, is far superior to anything I have ever seen; it is so absolutely perfect and lifelike."

Marie was entirely self-possessed. She, for the first time in her life, was floating in the atmosphere of love; she was doing this all for Edouard; to her, the vast and brilliant audience appeared no more than a row of pumpkin-heads. Edouard's success was in her mind. She bowed gracefully, but very mechanically, and paid not the slightest attention to the vociferous cheering and applause. She moved her head gracefully, but slowly, and faced the audience precisely as Mlle. L'Inconnue would have done had she been in her place. She raised the sheet music slowly, but properly, before her, with both hands. Her voice sounded far more melodious, if such were possible, than in the figure of Mlle. L'Inconnue at the Varieties, because she was aided by the perfect sounding-board and acoustics of the Grand Opera House. Her voice was low and sweet, but penetrated to the furthestmost recesses of the great building. The audience was spellbound and as still as death. For an encore, the figure remained and sang another popular song, changing the music she held in her hand each time. Then she backed gracefully to the side of the stage and bowed. The audience was wild. "En-

core, encore!" they yelled in unison. Excitable voices came from every part of the auditorium demanding more, more, and, while she slightly turned around so as not to tangle the wires on her back, the audience saw the string of peculiar glistening buttons arranged in the back of her dress, which flashed in the lime-light—and the applause continued for fully two minutes. Then she advanced to the front of the stage, and, producing in her hands two flags that had been handed to her from the flies—the tri-color of France and the Union Jack of England, (these she reached for in a mechanical way) and, as she sang "God Save the King" and followed by a verse of the "Marseillaise," accompanied by the great orchestra and all the many trained voices present, she gently, but very mechanically, waved the flags together.

The entire assemblage was on its feet, and a scene was presented the like of which never before occurred in the history of this great musical institution, the pride of France. Frenchmen shouted, "God bless Old England and long live her King." and English men and women sang out with all their might, "Vive la Belle France; forever long live France!"

The King, forgetting for the moment that he saw before him only an automaton, sent a beautiful red rose down to the stage by a page. The figure stood perfectly still for a moment, then moved cautiously forward, slowly raising her right hand, while she carried her music and the flags in her left:

she bowed respectfully, accepted the rose, smiled and curtsied, and retired from the stage.

So much confusion prevailed that it was impossible to proceed with the third and last act of the Grand Opera for fully thirty minutes. Marie was guided cautiously to her room, and all excluded, even M. Jolie, who had gone absolutely crazy from excitement and was not responsible for anything he said or did. He had looked into "Mademoiselle's" room shortly after the accident, and, having seen the distorted figure and burnt hair of poor "Mademoiselle," he was about to run away, and forced his way out beyond the foyer, down the steps. Hiding in the crowd that had assembled outside the opera house, he awaited anxiously the result of the accident. He then walked back, along the edge of the foyer, expecting to find either Jacques or Edouard, but they had disappeared.

"The dream is all over," he said. When, in a short period, he saw the famous Mlle. L'Inconnue walk serenely out on the stage, with her beautiful face and golden hair complete, he actually believed he had gone stark mad. "At last, mon Dieu, has it come to this?" He then ran behind the scenes, and there beheld Jacques serenely manipulating the wires, while the "Mademoiselle" was singing as lovely as ever, even more so. He then quieted himself by saying, "It's a bad case, a bad case. A sanitarium for me." He decided to go out into the open air until his palpitating heart should cease its extra beating.

Marie was the most composed one of all who had assembled that night in the Grand Opera House. When she retired to the room of the destroyed figure, Jacques carefully removed the wires and buttons from her back.

"How did I do, Edouard?" asked Marie, laughing, as if she had merely performed some trifling service for friendship.

"How did you do, my own Marie? Magnificently! Your acting was absolutely perfect, and your singing divine. Oh, Marie, you are my pride. You are the marvel—not Mlle. L'Inconnue. Now, dear," Edouard whispered, "you must not show yourself till the performance has closed and all have retired. I will go up and explain to Mme. Glenning the cause of your absence from the box."

"I fancy she knows it by this time," replied Marie, smiling. "Get her down here at once, and we can leave by the stage door in the auto when the last act of the opera is over and you say the audience has dispersed."

Mme. Glenning, the music teacher, like M. Jolie, also believed she had fallen into some peculiar state or trance, especially when Marie appeared and sang. Afterwards, however, when she saw the figure of Mlle. L'Inconnue, with its ghastly broken face and burnt hair, she quickly understood why Marie had deserted the box to take her place, and she was proud she had had the honor of developing Marie's voice to such perfection.

It was quite a long time before the great audience had left, and Marie, Mme. Glenning and Edouard believed it was quite safe to leave by the rear door of the opera house. After their departure, Jacques locked the door containing the remains of poor Mlle. L'Inconnue, and shambled out in his heavy ulster—for the night had turned raw and cold—to find M. Jolie, whom he soon discovered in their favorite cafe in a most dejected, incoherent and disconsolate mood. Upon the table, before the manager, some untouched refreshments appeared, and a sleepy waiter stood behind him awaiting further orders.

“How did you like it?” said Jacques.

The manager replied, abstractedly, “Oh, I don't know how I will like it; I was never in a sanitarium before.”

CHAPTER XIV.

MME. GLENNING sat with the chauffeur. She was a careful woman, and had provided two large woolen shawls, knowing the uncertainty of Parisian weather. Edouard, with one of them, covered Marie completely over and led her to her seat in the



auto in the same mechanical way adopted in moving Mlle. L'Inconnue.

"There goes that queer thing," said the night watchman.

"Queerest piece of humanity, elec-

tricity—or whatever it is, the Lord ever made. God help us, what next?"

The amount of space between Edouard and Marie during their homeward drive could not possibly be calculated by any known system of mathematics or measurement. He wrapped her in the warm woolen shawl, and held her so tightly that the raw, biting east wind proved entirely powerless. It is unnecessary to state that Marie was correspondingly comfortable and exceedingly happy.

"Marie, my angel, words cannot convey any idea of my pride and joy when you sang to-night. It

seems as if all my life, since I first met you, had been a wretched mistake. I have been so intensely interested in that manikin—or ‘womankin’—that, although it may seem to you positively absurd, I have actually loved that poor dumb thing. My mind has been so concentrated upon this figure and its mechanical accomplishments that no wonder I have acted like a perfect fool. I was even jealous of it. I hated to see men in the theatre admire it, and I detested to have them linger, looking at her, over and over again. I even possessed a peculiar sort of sympathy for it. I knew all the time this was unnatural. I knew my affection for such an automaton was preposterous, absurd, unreal and a lie. While I sat and listened to your voice to-night, and saw you take those wonderfully mechanical steps on the stage; when I saw your face behind the footlights; when I knew what you had accomplished—how calm you were, how brave you were, and so lovely in every respect, caring nothing for the audience or the excitement—then, for the first time, my own Marie, I knew in my heart of hearts it was you, my dear Marie, that I had loved, and the manufactured toy was merely a representation of your dear, sweet self. Yes, Marie, I loved you dearly the morning you put your head in the door to apologize for the late delivery of the milk. I loved the few words you sang going down the stairs upon the same occasion. I have loved you since, and I love you now—always and forever. I see it all—what a blind fool I have been.”

Marie never answered. She held her cheek close to Edouard's, while she leaned her head upon his shoulder. She was too happy to talk—no answer was necessary to his statements—and Edouard knew it.

Jacques told M. Jolie the whole story, while they chatted together in the *café chantant*. And they had a jolly laugh over the remarkable occurrence, and especially the fact that M. Jolie imagined for the time being that he was a fit subject for a sanitarium.

"It completely fooled the entire audience, king, president, dukes, duchesses, nobility, scientists, authors, and all the mortals and immortals present," said Monsieur Jolie, laughing heartily.

"Yes, and Marie fooled you, too," replied Jacques, without a smile.

"What will we do now?" asked Jacques.

"We must repair the creature at once," said Jolie, looking serious again. "Can it be done? Of course, I will announce to-morrow morning in the press that, owing to a slight accident to the figure, she will not appear again for one or two weeks, but that due notice will be given of her re-appearance when the repairs have been made."

"We must get Marie to permit a cast of her face to be made. I will find old Dobson, the wax figure maker, and bargain with him," said Jacques thoughtfully.

"Time will not be lost," added Jolie. "The theatre needs decorating anyway, and I will not go

on with the ordinary performances until 'Mademoiselle' is ready to appear. After that, we will fill our London engagement. The figure will be complete about the time the King returns to England, and one word from him will fill the biggest house in London for weeks—and, don't fear, Jacques, my boy, I will manage to get the word."

"Did you ever see such acting in your life, Jacques? That young woman is a wonderful person. She simply deceived every one in the audience and made them believe she was the manufactured automaton. When I saw her accept the King's rose, I then believed I had gone stark, staring mad. How in the world did you manage it?"

"You forget, M. Jolie, the whole thing this time was a hoax. The wires were not connected. Of course not; they would have burnt poor Marie into a crisp. She was smart enough to go forward and take the rose without any instructions. The page was scared blue. Did you see him wince? The buttons—oh, the buttons—deceived them all," said Jacques, again displaying that peculiar smile perpetrated only by men of genius. "The buttons deceived them all. When she turned around slightly they all saw the bright buttons. Marie has played this part before. She has imitated Mlle. L'Inconnue to amuse her friends, and she was quite at home and happy in the character."

"Mon Dieu," replied Jolie, earnestly, "happy in the character, indeed! She is the greatest living imitator on the stage to-day! She was the personi-

fication of dignity, and her voice—mon Dieu, her voice——. Tell the waiter to bring more coffee.”

The next morning the Paris press, together with the English and European newspapers, gave an elaborate account of the mechanical figure which performed before the King of England, President of France, and the grand audience. Far more space was allotted to the description of the automaton than to the Grand Opera, which caused the manager of the Opera House to remark, “Ah, the musical world is degenerating, and sensations and puppets are fast becoming the real rage.”

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was something superlatively beautiful concerning the love of both Edouard and Marie. While in one respect they were unsophisticated children, they both possessed such firm faith in each other that their love was without jealousy or fear of estrangement.



They had no forebodings of the future, and no particular realization of the sterner necessities of life. Marie was of a positive nature; she could not be induced to com-

mit a folly or wrong against her inclination. Edouard was quick-witted, ambitious and studious; his nature was tranquil and his disposition affectionate. He was generous and kind to all, and loved to make everybody happy. He was a great favorite in the shop, where he and Jacques still occasionally worked with their new experiments. His great ambition was to some day have a shop of his own in Paris, and have Pierre and Jacques manage it. The cousins had large and growing bank accounts. They made no investments, but received interest, compounded, on all their savings. M. Jolie

watched over them tenderly, and always manifested genuine pride in their success.

Edouard discovered that it was far less expensive to hire a taximeter auto than to own one, and during the rehabilitation of "Mademoiselle" by Giotto, Dobson, Jacques and others, he decided, in his boyish way, that Marie should be fitted out as would become the great star she had proved herself to be, and three new designs in dresses were ordered—one for the house, one for the street, and one for driving. Marie insisted that they should be made at a less expensive place than Mme. Picard's establishment, to which Edouard reluctantly consented. They wandered down the leading shop streets together, and finally discovered that the "Louvre" would do for Marie's plain dresses and hats. And, Marie having convinced Edouard that she would feel happier in plain, simple dresses, he decided also that her beauty was displayed to better advantage in dresses of her own choice.

"I don't care a snap, now," said Marie, exhibiting her engagement ring, when retiring from Spaulding's on the Rue de la Opera," whether they call me the wax figure, or the automaton, or a humbug. We are show people now, Edouard; sort of stars, you know. Rather dim ones, perhaps. You are the heavy tragedian, who slammed the door and knocked down the statue on top of the wax woman: you are an awful tragedian, because you killed poor 'Mademoiselle.' And I imitated her gait so

closely, the poor old King wasted a nice rose on me. He ought to have kept it for the Queen."

And then they looked into the windows of the various stores, and, like children, laughed and made fun of everything.

"The funniest thing about it all," said Edouard, "is that M. Jolie, Jacques told me, when he saw you on the stage—after witnessing the figure with its head knocked off and her hair burnt to a crisp—believed it was all an illusion and that he had gone temporarily out of his head."

"I hope we will always be as happy as we are now," said Edouard.

"Hush," replied Marie, upbraiding Edouard. "You must never say that again. I never permit myself to have forebodings. We shall always be just as happy as we are now. You said 'will;' I say shall. And now, please remember what I tell you;" Marie said sweetly, as she took Edouard's arm, "I shall never permit you to be unhappy; I shall never allow myself to become unhappy; that is my determination. Let us live up to it, or come as near as we can to such a condition." Adversity and extreme poverty, sickness or loss, had never discouraged Marie. She delivered her milk, usually before daylight; she went home after her tedious experience of the morning, cooked the breakfast, assisted in all the laborious work when her aunt was sick; sang, thought of pleasant things—laughed, and the world laughed with her. She had been a joyous maiden, looking on the bright side,

and always walking in a path of roses trimmed with virtue.

Marie was strong and powerful and of perfect health. She had carried the burden of the little home upon her shoulders; she had fought through all the various stages of adversity and perplexity, and had conquered. No wonder this brave little girl, not quite seventeen, could say to Edouard—her own Edouard—"We shall always be just as happy as we are now."

"I would like to know," remarked Edouard, as they were peering into the window of a famous jewelry store on the Rue de la Opera, "the month your ladyship was born in, because then we shall ask the kind of stone suitable for you." They entered the store.

"What month were you born in?" Edouard again asked Marie.

"December," she replied, blushing. The clerk smiled. I suppose you want to know the stone adapted to a person born in that month—a birth-stone. He handed Edouard a small red book. As Edouard turned the pages, he said, quoting, "December—Turquoise or Ruby—symbolizing brilliant success—which shall it be, Marie?"

"Both," suggested Edouard. And a ruby and a turquoise were quickly inserted in a two-stone gold ring and fitted to Marie's finger.

"And now," said Edouard, "we are off to find success; we are having all the happiness we want."

Everywhere they went people would stare at

Marie. It was her face that adorned thousands of signboards and cafes in Paris.

"Never mind," she said, "Let them stare. I don't care a snap; I'm impervious to all notoriety or fame; I am yours; and yours alone!"

It was announced in the daily press next day that owing to repairs and reconstruction of the Varieties, there would be no performance for two weeks, and that the famous Mlle. L'Inconnue would be removed to fill an engagement in London. Then the author of this movement, M. Jolie, in his customary sarcastic style, announced further, "Owing to the severe strain upon Mademoiselle's nerves during the past year, she not having missed a single performance, the lady would take a short vacation for a few days before appearing in London, and that she would await the completion of a new set of Marcel waves, hers being partially destroyed by an accident at the Grand Opera House, occasioned by crossing of two wires." Many who read this still believed that it was a real woman, and that the statement was merely an advertisement inserted to put the people off their guard. There were many in Paris who would swear positively that they had seen the automaton referred to eating and drinking about with her director and manager, M. Jolie, and that she had also been seen repeatedly driving about Paris with Edouard, the young cousin of Jacques.

"That man Jolie pretends he does not drink," said a bystander, one day, in a cafe, "but I noticed the fixed-up woman had a penchant for drinking things through a straw, and old Jolie, I'll wager, joins her."

The great card had come at last to Jolie. The leading newspaper of Paris had stated in an article that His Majesty had remarked, before his departure to England, that the made-up woman he had seen in the opera house had entertained him wonderfully. "If I should be compelled to decide," His Majesty had declared, "whether the woman was real or an imitation, I should certainly say that the subject was alive. I cannot comprehend the art, skill and ingenuity that could construct such a being."

This statement had been copied in various London and Parisian newspapers. M. Jolie was a shrewd manager, and he and Jacques had decided upon a plan which would earn them a great amount of money. The great question was, would Marie consent?

Edouard had secured a servant for Aunt Placide, and Mme. Glenning was to be Marie's constant companion. Jolie and Jacques, at their evening suppers, had decided that if they could induce Marie to perform at one of the large vaudeville theatres in London, and have the rehabilitated figure perform alternately with her, and also both appear alternately at some other theatre—say the Alhambra

and the Albion—that it would keep the variety-going public of London in a constant state of conjecture.

“Marie’s imitation of the automatic figure will certainly be a great drawing card,” said M. Jolie, “and the ignorant portion of the audience would not distinguish one from the other.”

Jacques shook his head doubtfully. “It will be impossible, I am afraid, to secure her services. But Edouard seems to have won her confidence—he is with her half the time—and very likely he can induce her to go with us to London and perform.”

In a few days, all preparations having been made, and the figure reconstructed and completed, “Mademoiselle” was shipped in the baggage car, by express, having been carefully rolled up in cotton-batting and fine tissue paper. An important contract had been entered into between M. Jolie, Jacques and Edouard, and the managers of the Albion and Alhambra theatres in London. Edouard had made every arrangement necessary to provide for Mme. Placide during their absence, and, although Marie at first did not fancy the idea of becoming a public performer upon the stage, she became more enthusiastic when she knew she would visit London and go sight-seeing almost every day during their visit there, and—better than all Edouard was to be with her, while she was being chaperoned by kind Mme. Glenning.

After several days’ preparation in the Alhambra theatre, the important “first night” arrived. The

King's statement having been published on the programmes and quoted in a great many newspapers, the street in front of the door was crowded for nearly half a block. There was almost a riot. Hundreds could not procure admission, and they, in turn, went over to see the imitation by Marie at the Albion, which was less crowded.

After the first performers had given their performances at the Alhambra, Mlle. L'Inconnue was introduced. "It's a real woman; it's a fraud," they shouted. "It's a humbug; throw her out! Cut her in two!" Cat-calls were made and numerous hisses. Soon a general row occurred. Many in the audience tried to restore quiet. M. Jolie, who had been studying for several months brushing up his English, stepped to the front. At one time M. Jolie managed a London Music Hall, and knew pretty well how to soothe a ruffled audience. He risked his English.

"Gentlemen," he said, "will you listen to me one moment? This figure is an automaton, and I will prove it to you in one minute if you will give me a chance."

This statement was followed by another volley of hisses, cat-calls and groans, while a number of men in the boxes and in the first rows of the parquet jumped to their feet and demanded fair play. M. Jolie, accustomed to speaking under an excited condition of a house, smiled and remained quite calm.

“What evidence do you require for me to demonstrate to you that this figure is as advertised—merely an automaton?”

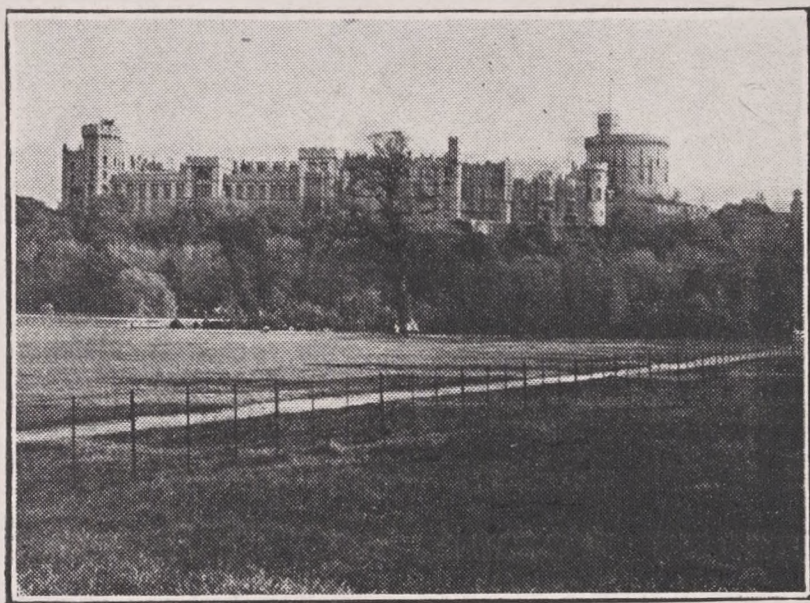
“Cut her head off,” one loud voice roared—which caused much laughter and applause.

Jacques, who rather enjoyed the excitement, knowing that eventually they would come out all right, came forward at the request of M. Jolie. He turned the figure's back to the audience, took out what appeared to be a panel from her back, and then turned on a current. The entire “insides” of Mlle. L'Inconnue appeared to be one electric blaze, and much of the machinery was readily seen by the audience. Those who had yelled the loudest, returned to their seats, and yelled, “she's all right, she's all right!” and three cheers were given for M. Jolie and the automatic woman, and “Mademoiselle's” singing was received with marvelous effect upon the now quieted audience. At the end of the act, M. Jolie was called to the stage, and announced that this wonderful automatic figure would appear at the Alhambra every other night until further notice. She would also appear, alternately, every other night at the Albion. He also announced that Mlle. Marie, of Paris, the most wonderful imitator the world has ever known, would also appear alternately in the two theatres mentioned, and give her marvelous imitation of Mlle. L'Inconnue.”



CHAPTER XVI.

DAYS passed pleasantly in London, and Edouard, Mme. Glenning and Marie rode about on the busses and drove through the parks in an auto Edouard had secured to take them out, every day during their visit in London. They also enjoyed many afternoon per-



formances at the other theatres. Marie was becoming proficient in English, and sang many English record songs, popular in London, and never appeared to

weary in her efforts to please Edouard.

Many little incidents happened in Marie's career upon the stage which were very annoying to her, but with the excellent companionship of Mme. Glenning, she paid little or no attention to what might have been embarrassing had she not had this worthy woman with her.

The number of young loafers, many possessing honored names and titles, in the great metropolis is never known until one makes a visit to the many better-class vaudeville and variety theatres in London. Dressed in the height of fashion, owning automobiles, or using the family cars to entertain

very bad company, burning up the gasoline of their proud parents in skylarking about the city in the small hours of the morning, and spending money they never earned—these effeminate and silly youths strut about the public places in the daytime and frequent the gayer night resorts, assuming airs usually displayed only by the higher grade of gamblers and professional sports. When a new beauty appears at any of the variety shows, they flock to see her. Through officials connected with the theatres, they find no difficulty in obtaining introductions to the reigning queens of variety. Young Lord Albermarle Fitzhugh Grace Martindale was a fair representative of this class. He had heard Marie sing, and was well pleased with her voice. He sought an introduction, but Marie respectfully declined. One rebuff has no effect upon a fop. He occupied a box one evening, with several of his chums, all of whom had been drinking, and he decided to send a bunch of beautiful roses to Marie upon the stage, prior to her appearance. Supposing the roses had been sent by Edouard, which act was a frequent occurrence, she picked out the largest and wore it at her breast. The young swells were delighted, and complimented his lordship.

“Oh, I’ll get her out some night yet, for an auto ride,” he said. “They are always timid during the first stages of their careers, don’t you know.”

Several nights after this occurrence he again appeared at the Alhambra, where Marie was to sing.

Learning from Edouard that the bouquet she had accepted was not his, Marie decided to turn down the young lord for all time. The stage manager having taken the precaution to inform her of his lordship's intentions, Marie was prepared. After the first song, an usher was called to the box occupied by Martindale, and, evidently for the purpose of attracting the attention of the audience, he personally handed the bouquet of roses to the usher and pointed to the stage. At the close of the song the usher went up the steps at the side of the stage to present Marie with the flowers. She never saw them. Again the usher tried to have her accept them. But again Marie refused to recognize him. The audience understood the situation at once, and the applause was deafening. Young Martindale changed color and tried to disappear behind the curtains of the box. Marie, quite self-possessed, looked up at the box and remarked, "Take them home to your mamma, little boy."

It is unnecessary to state that this remark caught with the audience, and the young lord saw his finish. It was his final appearance at any theatre where Marie sang. When Marie left the stage to go to her dressing room the night of the occurrence, the stage-manager, who had noticed the incident, came up and shook hands with her heartily, saying: "Good girl; well done! You have done me a great favor to-night—more than you can comprehend. You are as safe now from the 'Johnnies' as if you were surrounded by a regi-

ment with bayonets drawn. Your 'throwing' the young pup, as we call him, was the best thing that has happened in this theatre for years. Good girl, good girl. You don't know how much I admire you for it."

The evening of this occurrence Edouard was assisting Jacques at the other theatre, and knew nothing of the incident until it was related to him at breakfast the ensuing morning by Mme. Glenning. Marie sat busily eating her toast and honey and sipping her coffee, and when Mme. Glenning had finished her story, a knowing smile flitted over the cup of coffee to Edouard.

"It came out all right, dear Edouard," she said; "but I will not regret the day we leave the stage forever."

Many well-meaning people, afflicted with a trace of puritanism, inherited probably from their ancestors, who may have taken a hand in burning witches, believe that no possible virtue can exist among people who perform upon the variety stage. Marie, although but little experienced in the ways of the world, had discovered that one family of performers, at least, could be credited with many attributes that go to make life dearer and better. A French acrobatic troupe, consisting of father, mother, three daughters, two small sons, and a nephew, preceded Marie in her act every night. The strong arm of this mother, who could easily lift the entire family upon her chest while her body was

turned back like an inverted turtle, served as a "guide" in directing the conduct of the "children," as she called them all. This troupe was drilled to perform the most incredible feats of strength and agility. Their marvelous act could only be performed by reason of their superb physical condition.

Three somersaults in the air from the sinewy shoulders of the mother, alighting upon the broad and massive collar-bones of the father, was brave little Suzette's nightly duty. To perform this seemingly impossible feat, she was compelled to use superior alertness and superhuman strength. Not one in a million, no matter how trained, could do it.

The boys were living spinning tops, and the elderly girls giants in alertness, agility and strength. So tender and kind to each other were the members of this strange family, that even their appearance was a lesson in self-sacrifice, and their muscular development a lecture on physical perfection. They appealed to Marie; and they, also, had become interested in Marie.

The superhuman strength of the parents seemed to have been transmitted to the children. When an error was made by any of the children during their most hazardous performance, it was followed by a smile and a kiss from the mother and a pleasant nod from the father.

The slightest illness or nervousness on the part of either one of these acrobats might cause fatal consequences.

They worked in harmony like the machinery of a clock. No serious error had been made for years.

On Sundays—when there was no performance—they attended church. They seldom separated. They were extremely cautious about their food and drink. They all, including the father, looked up to and respected the mother. During their leisure hours they romped and played together like school children. It was a most harmonious family, and no Christian Union could possibly produce a more virtuous, upright and respectable company than these acrobats.

The question arises in one's mind, whether the Great Architect, when he looks over the numerous makings of his hand, does not say: "Those acrobats are physically perfect; it is a joy to behold them. I made them and they are good."

Several other acts Marie noticed were performed by refined men and women, who found in this a method of obtaining a good livelihood.

Legerdemain, singing, performing on musical instruments, dancing and acrobatic feats no doubt have amused and entertained audiences since the days of Abraham, and will continue till the end of the world—puritanical opinions notwithstanding.

Marie did not so much object to the influence of the stage; it was the conduct of the frequenters of the place that determined the simple little milk girl to return to her home in Paris.

The genuine attraction, after several months, was the "Automatic Vocalist," as Mademoiselle L'Inconnue now became known. Managers of the theatres insinuated that Marie, in addition to her wonderful imitation act, should dance and sing in other acts, and they would pay her for this an extra large salary. They hinted at short skirts and breezy songs, and said that she would fill the house for months if she would so perform. Edouard was not informed of this proposition. Marie positively declined to make any changes in her dress or in the character of her selections, and it was decided that, at the termination of her contract, Edouard, Marie and Mme. Glenning should return to Paris, while M. Jolie and Jacques were to visit other cities throughout England, offering Mlle. L'Inconnue as the sole performer. The night before Marie and Edouard returned to Paris, Marie was disconsolate.

"Are you sorry, Marie, that you came here?"

"Not at all, dear Edouard; but I am glad it is all over. I don't like it."

"Brave girl, you have done all this for me! I will never permit you to sing upon a stage again—Well, perhaps at a charity concert."

"Thank you, thank you, dear Edouard. For months I have maintained my composure to please you. I did not want you to know what I have heard. How much I have been embarrassed, and almost offended, night after night, while upon the stage you will never know. I have heard remarks that chilled my blood. Bless you, Edouard, I am

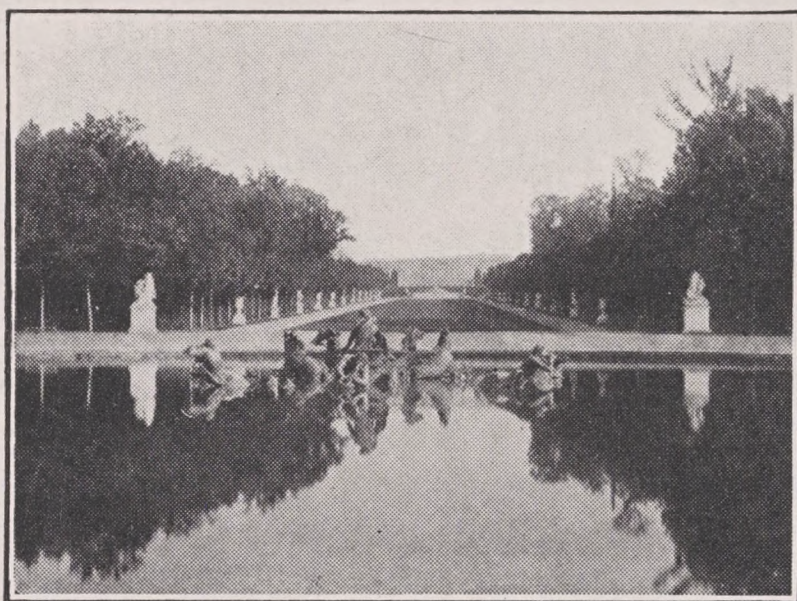
glad you have decided to abandon it all, because I would sooner deliver milk before daylight, as of old, than to listen to the conversation I have been compelled to overhear of late."

"Now," said Edouard, "I think we both agree. Dear old Paris for us. I have a letter from Uncle Pierre, and he wants me to take an interest in the toy establishment of Cabot et Cie."

Mme. Glenning, overhearing the conversation, put her arms tenderly about Marie, and said, "My dear, you are too noble a girl to perform upon any variety stage."

CHAPTER XVII.

M. DORION, one of the partners of the great toy manufacturing firm of Cabot et Cie, had determined to retire from active business. Pierre Luvois, who had always been his favorite in the workshop, was called to his office.



“My Dear friend, Pierre,” he said, “you have been faithful to me and the firm for twenty-five years; I am getting old, and have decided to retire and go to my win-

ter home on the Mediterranean, near Nice. I am going to give you the right to buy my interest out.”

Pierre smiled, and replied: “It would take a great amount to do that, sir.”

“Not so much as you would imagine, good Pierre. I would like to know how much you have saved during your connection with us.”

“I have a little over 20,000 francs in the savings bank, which is all I possess.”

“My interest in this firm is said to be valued at 1,500,000 francs: it pays good dividends on that sum. I understand your nephews have done re-

markably well with that marvelous automatic woman."

"Indeed, they have," replied Pierre. "It is astonishing how much money they have made, and to-day they are simply coining money in London. Mlle. L'Inconnue is called in that city, 'The Famous Automatic Vocalist.' And that young woman who used to sell milk, and has such a divine voice, is with them, giving imitations of the automaton."

"Pierre," said M. Dorion, "I am seventy, and I don't believe that the firm has ever appreciated fully the amount of work you have done for us. Inventors are seldom appreciated; others usually reap the benefit of their genius and labor. I am going to give you a fortune."

Pierre's face blanched slightly. He looked into M. Dorion's face steadfastly, knowing that M. Dorion never made a promise unless he intended to keep it.

"It will not be necessary for you to mention, at present, to any one what I now propose. I intend to convey to you one-half of my entire interest in this firm."

"Why, why, my dear Monsieur, you overwhelm me! It is too much; far too much. I have never earned one-tenth that amount. What have I done to earn all this fortune, my protector—my dearest friend on earth? Your good will is all I could expect!"

M. Dorion smiled, and replied, "Never mind,

Pierre, I am through with business; I will go to Nice this winter. I have a modest, but beautiful cottage there. I really enjoy the simple life. I have no relative but my son in the army—Henri—you know him. I am afraid any large sum of money given to him now would prove his ruination. I have, however, amply provided for him in my will, and he will inherit all my valuable improved property in Paris. I am not cutting him out of my inheritance in making this donation to you. Pierre, I have given this subject due consideration. So, when the transfer is legally and properly made, one-half of all my stock and interest in this concern will become yours.”

Tears filled Pierre’s eyes.

“Now, when I think of it,” continued M. Dorion, “there is one request I desire to make of you, and it will be better, perhaps, for you to pay something for this interest, so as to avoid any legal complications that may come up. The famous toy you have lately invented of the “walking bear” is selling wonderfully well. When you are installed in the firm as my successor, I desire that you should expend ten thousand francs out of your savings to advertise this toy. By doing this, a large revenue will be received by the firm.”

“Why, I will gladly do more than that, M. Dorion; I will spend five times that sum, if you will permit me.”

“No, no, Pierre; it is unnecessary. All that is really necessary to do is to have a circular gotten

up explaining the working of the toy, and have thousands of these circulars mailed to all the leading toy dealers in Europe. This will accomplish the result I desire. Remember I am an old hand at the advertising business. I also understand that your nephew, Edouard, desires to become interested in toy manufacturing. Should he desire to buy one-fourth of my interest, leaving me still one-fourth, he may do so at a lower cash price than I would dispose of the same to any other person. I admire that boy and love him, and he would become a valuable accession to the business. He is a great manager for a young fellow of his age. You might notify him of this proposition and try and bring the sale about. That boy has youth and brains. I like him very much."

M. Jolie decided to visit Liverpool, Manchester, and many cities before returning to the continent, as the fame of the mechanical woman was spreading everywhere, and Jacques decided that, as they would remain a week or two in each city, Mlle. L'Inconnue's repertoire was sufficient to supply them during the entire trip. And even if they should require a certain song, Marie could sing it in the records and Edouard could forward it to them. M. Jolie, however, was inclined to the belief that, in the cities they were about to visit, records of songs not quite so refined would be preferable; and, if this should occur, other voices than Marie's could be used to advantage.

M. Jolie said, "We will appear in halls fre-

quented by the working classes, who delight in catchy and topical songs."

It was a slight parting of the ways, and although Edouard was to retain an interest in the profits of his invention, he rejoiced at the expectancy of a business more suited to his taste, and he frequently said to Marie, on their way back to Paris: "My dear, I am glad we are out of it all. And how I loved you when you scorned that manager's proposition to wear short skirts and sing breezy songs. Oh, how proud I was of you; oh, how proud I was of you!"

Placing her hand gently on Edouard's shoulder, she replied, "Edouard, I am yours always, depend on me—yours for everything that is right."

Uncle Pierre rejoiced at Edouard's return to Paris, and Edouard also was delighted to hear of the proposition made to Uncle Pierre by M. Dorion. Edouard's cash balance in the Bank of France was sufficient to pay the amount demanded by M. Dorion for one-fourth of his interest in the firm, the face value of which was largely discounted by the kindly old gentleman.

Aunt Placide was overwhelmed with joy to have Marie back, and decided to accept Edouard's proposition to move into a suitable apartment, rent the cottage, and sublet the milk business.

A year passed. Jacques and M. Jolie, after a most successful financial trip, also returned to Paris, where a joyful meeting was held in which M. Jolie, Jacques, Edouard, Marie and Mme. Glen-

ing all took part. The days rolled by. Marie was true to her word. She was never unhappy, and never permitted Edouard to become despondent for a minute. Many pleasant drives and visits were made, in which Jacques—and even M. Jolie—frequently joined them. Mme. Glenning, well supplied with funds by the liberal Edouard, who was fast becoming a man of wealth, returned to England and went to live with her former friends.

Another tranquil year passed, and then a wedding took place. Marie appeared more beautiful than ever in her bridal trousseau. And Edouard, grown to be a handsome man, although still so young, was as happy as a mortal could possibly be. M. Jolie, Uncle Pierre, and Jacques tendered many handsome and valuable presents to the bride. And, at Edouard's request, they all went together for a long trip after the ceremony in two large autos. Driving through a delightful portion of sunny France, many happy hours were passed; and, as they were sitting one summer evening on the large piazza of a famous hotel in Nice, in walked M. Dorion to offer his most profound congratulations.

M. Jolie and Jacques received a business dispatch to return at once to Paris. And, after a few weeks' of wedded bliss, Marie said to Edouard:

"Dear, you have your real electric sweetheart now, and I have my own Edouard. Let us go home."

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